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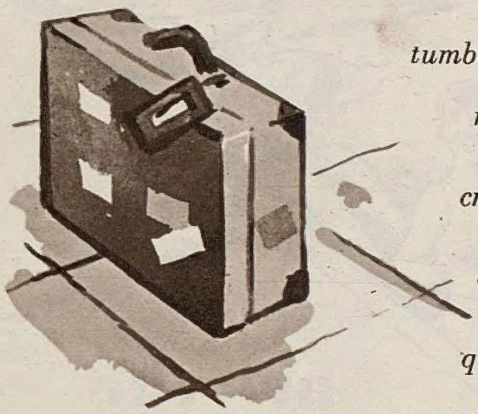

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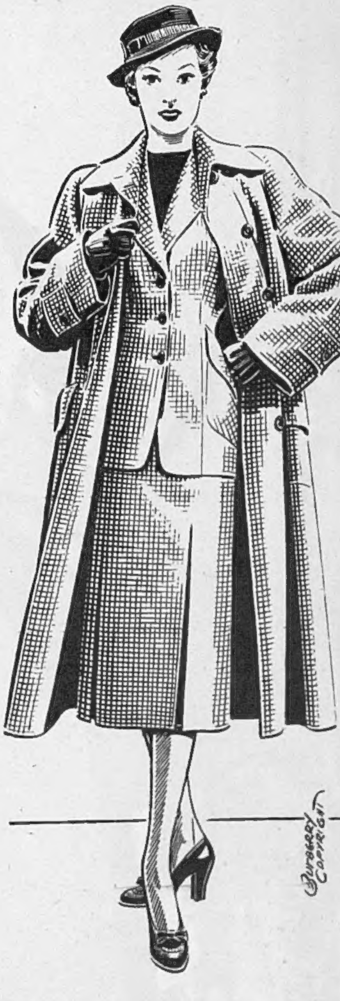

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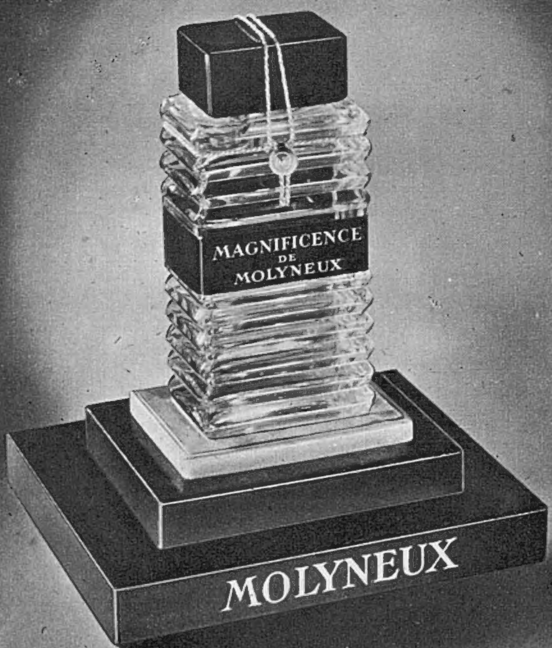

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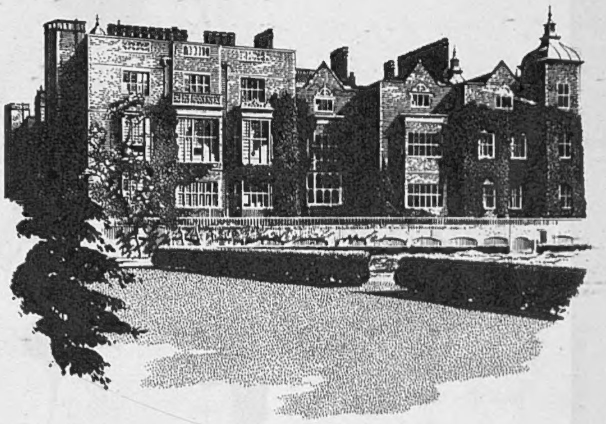

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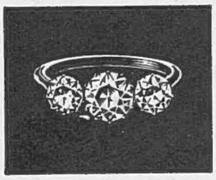

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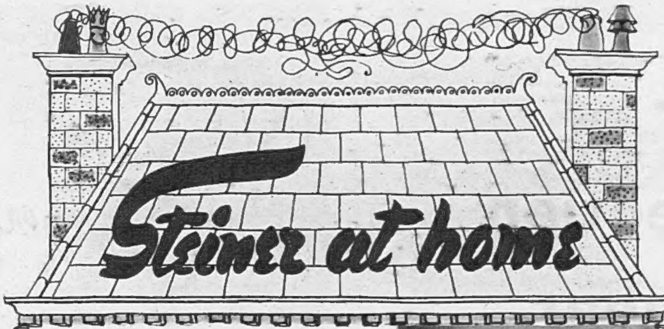

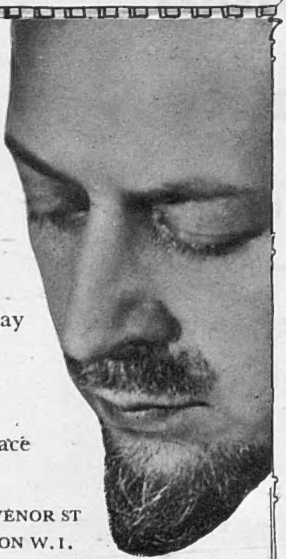

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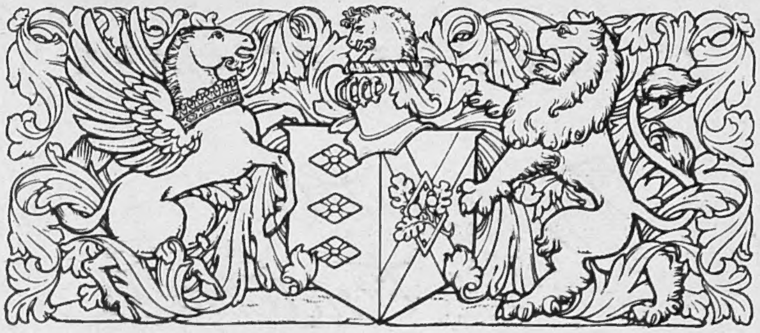

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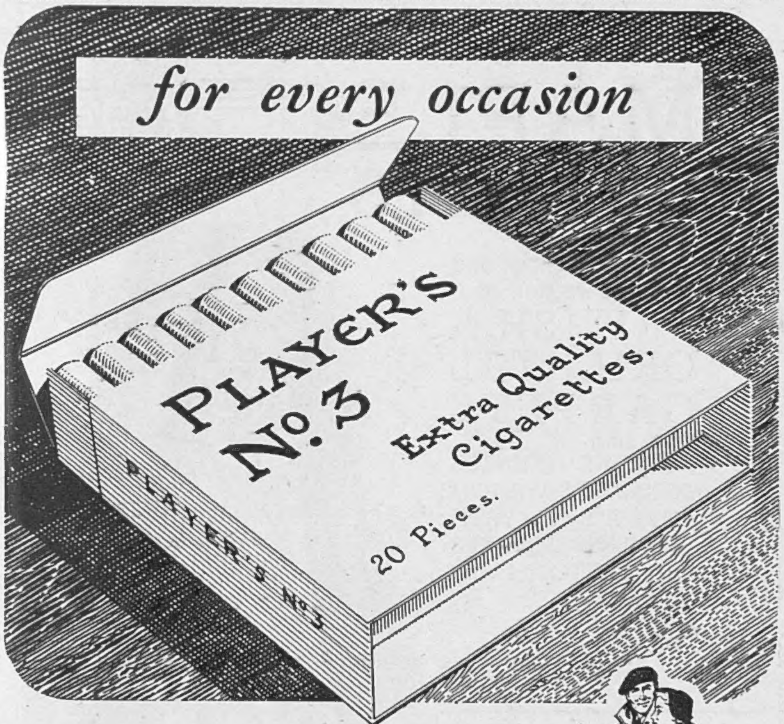

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[3P106]

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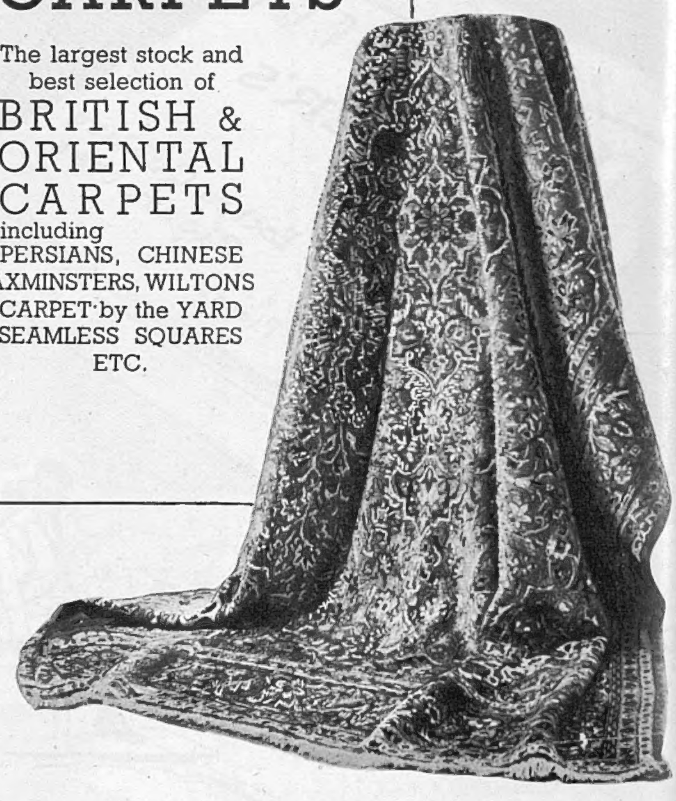

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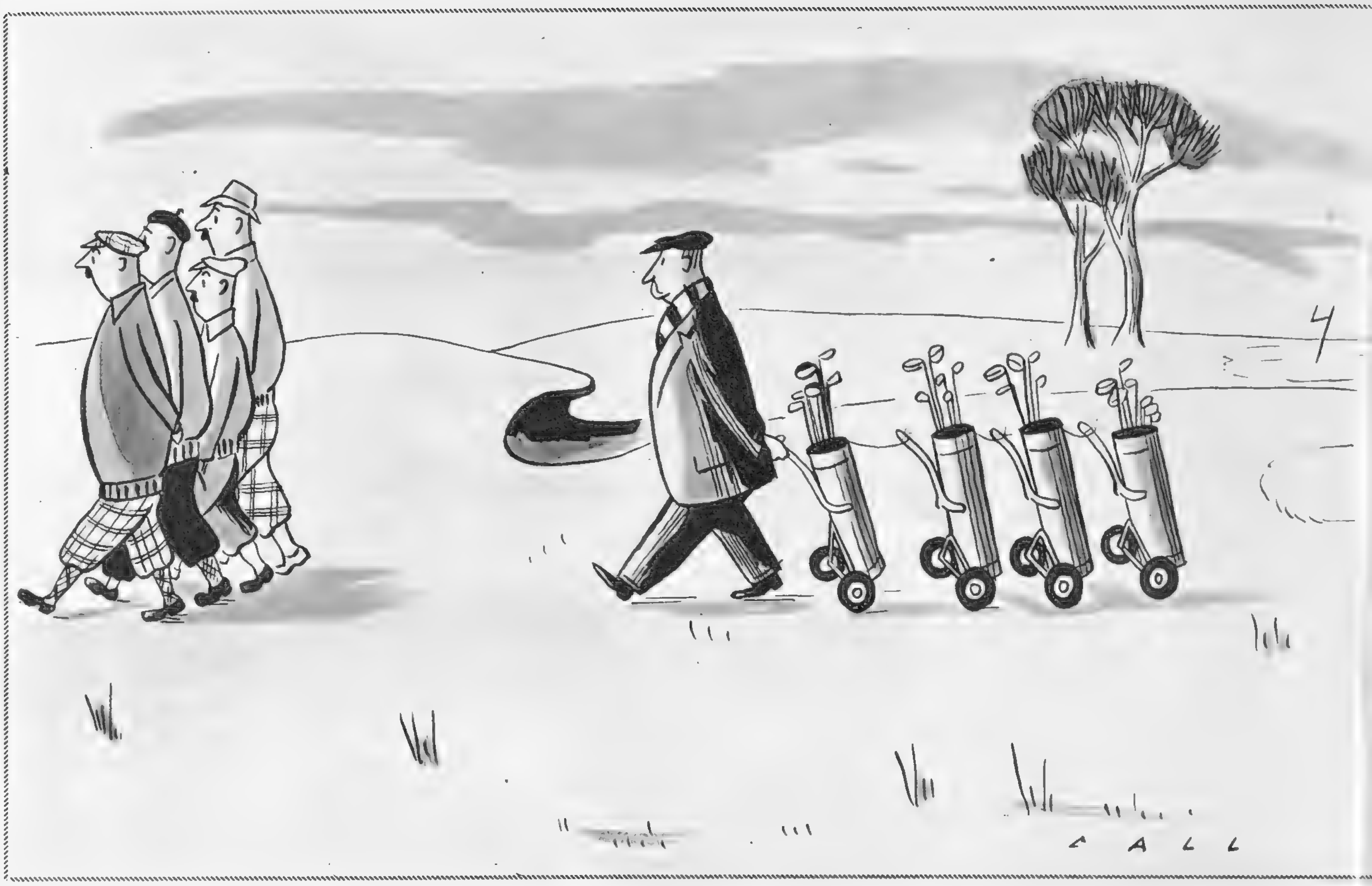
The Sketch

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1951

ROYAL AMBASSADORS

T.R.H. Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh arranged to sail yesterday, September 25, from Liverpool in the C.P.R. liner *Empress of France* for their tour of Canada. Great preparations for a warm reception have been made, but at their special request engagements are to be as informal as possible. Later, on October 24, the Royal pair are due in Washington, U.S.A., for a two-day visit.



Our Motley Notes

BY TOBY O'BRIEN

FOR anyone who takes a car abroad the air ferry between Lympne and Le Touquet must surely be *the* way of crossing the Channel. If there is a party of you, it is very little more expensive than the surface crossing. In addition, if you are bound for Spain, as I was (I scribble these notes and endeavour not to be distracted from them by the utter beauty of the scenery of this sunbaked little Spanish cove), you have the further saving of a night fewer in the delightful but comparatively expensive hotels of France. I imagine, of course, that in the winter there may be occasions when the Dunkirk Ferry can cross the Channel and the Bristol Wayfarers that carry you across in twenty minutes from Lympne are grounded. For all their efficiency, too, Silver City Airways are no less afflicted by the normal delays and exasperations which are inseparable from air travel. I must, however, give them one good mark. That is, that if there is a delay they tell you why. No aspect of air transport is more exasperating than the refusal of airline operators (and this, I think, applies all over the world, and not merely to our own native nationalised lines) to tell you *why* there is an "hour's delay"—or, indeed, to come clean and break it to you that the "hour" is an Irish one, and may well last a day.

Wartime travelling, of course, provided in many cases legitimate security excuses for refusing to tell passengers why they were held up in disagreeable places, from Gander to those two corrugated iron hangars on the wind-swept steppe of Teheran airport. (The interception and shooting-down of Leslie Howard's plane from Lisbon was almost certainly due to his sending an *en clair* telegram to England, giving the place and approximate time of his arrival.) On the other hand, many of us suspected that that one-o'clock-in-the-morning assembly time, followed by the statutory four hours meaningless wait, was just part of the mumbo-jumbo, the fetishism of air transport, calculated to reduce passengers to that cowed state of dull resignation which would ensure that they took, like Zombies, whatever their masters dished out to them.

In peacetime, however, it seems to me that there is no excuse, and some of the shrewder of our airline operators will privately admit that this is so. Personally, I want to be told that the tail has unfortunately dropped off the plane in which it was intended I should fly, or that the pilot (if you can imagine such a thing in a nationalised concern) is suffering from a hangover and a replacement cannot be found. If, for instance, it is known to the airline that the aircraft which you are to join in London has not yet left Frankfurt or Collingstown, surely such new fandangled inventions as radio-telephony and radio-telegraphy should make it possible to tell the passengers that there will be a delay amounting to at least the flying time between Frankfurt

and London, plus whatever time is necessary for refuelling and checking over at Northolt, or London Airport? I have in mind one particularly exasperating incident. Before Collingstown was equipped for night flying we were kept a day at Northolt, until it was almost dark. It was then announced that the flight to Dublin was cancelled as the aircraft coming from Dublin could not get back there before dark. It must have been known (or could surely have been ascertained) by the airport authorities that the aircraft was leaving Collingstown too late to get to London in time to do a turn round. A simple process of mathematics, plus a little more candour, would have enabled the passengers to get the night boat with more than a few minutes to spare. As it is, I imagine, on the occasions when things do go wrong (and in justice to B.E.A. and B.O.A.C. they seldom do these days), that hell must bear a very close resemblance to a nationalised British passengers' waiting-room. There must be the same feeling of utter despair, the same feeling that one is there for all eternity, the same feeling of being at the mercy of anonymous incalculable forces entirely outside one's control, so that even the sandwiches in their cellophane packets—the damp of the tomatoes fighting a losing battle with the staleness of the bread—and the inability to get a drink at any reasonable hour, acquire an infernal malignancy of their own. So, as I say, I give Silver City full marks for the fact that when we were held up (for no more than an hour) they told us that this was due to their having had to take an aircraft out of service.

THE almost inspired unpleasantness of British catering is, of course, brought home to you as soon as you cross the Channel. Two Americans, in an amusing recent book, in which they poked affectionate fun at our Island, record—if I remember rightly—seeing a Belgian at the next table to them in a hotel at Stratford. "*Qu'est-ce que c'est, mademoiselle,*" he asked, "*ce 'toad-in-the-hole'?*" One of the authors thought: "He 'll soon find out." He did. "*Horreur!*" he kept shouting at intervals—but nobody took any notice.

While I am not sure that I agree with those who hold that English hotel cooking is something to do with the doctrine of Original Sin, I do believe that it is due more to laziness and lack of imagination than to actual viciousness on the part of the management and the staff. It is also sometimes due, in London at least, to chefs losing heart over the poorness of the materials with which they have to work. I remember discussing this with M. Georges Marin, then manager of Brown's Hotel and now running the Plaza-Athénée, in Paris. I had occasion to organise one or two luncheon parties in private rooms at Brown's for parties from twelve to twenty. M. Marin and I discussed the matter at considerable length with the chef. He told me afterwards that the chef was almost in tears of gratitude at being able really to exercise his talents—and in the event the bill was by no means excessive. Indeed, I know of only two places in London (and I shall certainly not tell you which they are) where you can get a meal as good as those in even some of the simpler hotels at which we ate on our way through France.

Perhaps every country gets the cooking it deserves, and that, like the snail, we carry the house of our inadequate catering around with us. If you want the company of your fellow citizens and a nice cup of tea, it is wiser to go to Torquay than Torremolinos. From all foreigners the art of making tea is one which Providence has seen fit to withhold—just as some people are born deaf or are without the proper complement of fingers or toes. There is nothing to be done about it. It is just an immutable law of nature. Not flattery, nor cajolery, not even bribery in the more venial countries, will alter this. You may have a complete command of the language. You may insist on vetting the ingredients. You may give the most precise instructions. You may storm. You may speak slowly and patiently in those restrained tones which we reserve for children, foreigners and recalcitrant horses. It will avail you nothing. Better reconcile yourself to your tea-less fate. I am moved to write this by the poignant spectacle of the English couple lunching at the same little hotel in Abbeville. After lunch he had coffee. She ordered tea. It came. She poured. She lifted the lid and peered within. Wild surmise, incredulous disbelief, utter loathing chased each other across her homely features as she prodded with a spoon at the Thing, the little bag containing the many times used herbs which had never seen Assam or China. A tarantula in the pot would, I believe, have surprised and shocked her less.

ANOTHER immutable law of nature—indeed, I am modestly prepared to give it to natural-scientists under the title of "O'Brien's Law"—is that You Can Never Get The Last Mosquito. It is important for all visitors to hotels in mosquito countries which do not provide mosquito nets to recognise this—and resign themselves to it. I have proved this to my dissatisfaction twice recently. Once I was at the Hotel Moderne et Saint Regis in Chalons-sur-Saône (it was, I presume, modern in the days of the saint, but has dropped back a bit since—though the *quenelles de brochet aux écrevisses* was on a par with the *jambon à la crème* at the Escargot at Joigny, and fully earned the star awarded to it by the excellent M. Michelin). The other was at Avignon. Do not kid yourself. As that first "ping" falls on your dozing ear you may snatch wildly at the empty air, turn on the light, and even see the culprit polishing his legs, with a satisfied look, on the wall above your head. You may get him. As his colleague next in line comes in to the attack, you may switch on every light, scan every inch of wall or ceiling, plaster the walls with the corpses of your victims, flatten them on the ceiling with well-aimed pillow throws (incidentally, there can be no more deliciously appalling noise at 3 a.m. in a strange hotel than a pillow falling in the middle of the dinner-tray you have told the waiter to leave as you want an early night after a long drive), you may beat the curtains for that old cock mosquito that prefers to run rather than fly; you may do all these things. You will never—as hands, wrists and face will prove on the morrow—get that last mosquito.

Toby O'Brien

"And this one is called Dome of Discovery."
Drawn by James.

Cecil Beaton, designer of costumes and décor for the new production of *Casse Noisette*, pulled a wishbone with ballerina Margot Fonteyn. Lady Rothermere, on left, and choreographer Frederick Ashton, right, watched the fun.

Sadler's Wells Farewell Party

As a send-off to the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet Company prior to their six months' Canadian-American tour, impresario Mr. Sol Hurok threw a party at Bloomsbury's Victoria Hall. The company was due to sail yesterday, September 25, in the *Empress of France*, in which T.R.H. Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh were travelling, and a special performance has been arranged in their honour. During their tour the company will dance a repertory of sixteen ballets, and it is hoped they will score as big a success as their elders, the Sadler's Wells Ballet from Covent Garden Opera House, did.

Photographed exclusively for "The Sketch" by George Konig.

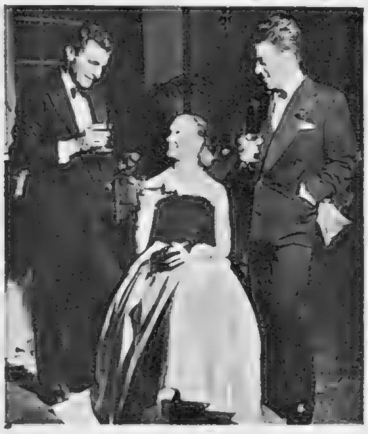
Hilarious group—Norman Tucker, Director of Opera at Sadler's Wells, with, l. to r.: Patricia Miller, Elaine Fifield, Peggy van Praagh, ballet mistress and assistant director for the American tour, and Maureen Bruce.

Sol Hurok, impresario and host at the party, with his two ballerinas, Elaine Fifield, left, and Svetlana Beriosova.

South African Mrs. Miller and her daughter Patricia drank a toast with Mr. W. Leslie Day.

Dancer Pauline Wadsworth looked graceful as she chatted with Mr. Anthony Howes.

Conversation-piece between a member of the company Annette Page and Walter Trevor.



Maureen Bruce was gay, with two escorts, Peter Wright, left, and Pirmin Trecu.

At the party Margaret Sear had a congratulatory kiss from ballet mistress Peggy van Praagh. Shirley Bishop was amused.

A charm of dancers chatted about their forthcoming tour to David Gill. L. to r.: Brenda Averty, Josephine Gordon, Doreen Tempest and Hermione Harvey.

With David Webster, director of Covent Garden, was a group of members of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet Company: l. to r.—Stella Farrance, Stella Claire, Joan Cadzow and Yvonne Barnes.

Photographed by Roger Wood.

Destined for Greatness . . .

The enchanting Elaine Fifield recently danced her first important rôle—heroine of the new Sadler's Wells revival of *Coppelia*, and drew from Dame Ninette de Valois, Director of the company, sturdy praise: "Fifield," said Dame Ninette, "will go to the top." "Fifi" is just twenty years old, a slight, brown-eyed girl who started to dance at the age of eight in her native Sydney. She took up ballet to develop her frail physique, and her parents in Australia have never seen her on the stage. They would have been proud to have watched her brilliant Sugar Plum Fairy in the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet's new production of *Casse Noisette*. At the first-night party illustrated on our preceding pages, impresario Sol Hurok, who is taking the company to America, spoke of Pavlova, Danilova: "I have managed all the great ones—Fifield is in that class." She is not another Fonteyn—yet: there are years of passionate devotion to her art ahead. One of the most touching tributes to her success came when, at the party, she was toasted by Margot Fonteyn (left).

Social Diary

SEPT. 6.

HIGHLAND FLING.

Left : At the Aboyne Games, genially chatting in the chieftain's tent were brothers Lord Huntly (right), Premier Marquess of Scotland, and Lord Adam Gordon. On the left, Lord Huntly's son and heir, little Lord Aboyne, and, behind, his daughter, Lady Lemina Gordon ; right, Roddy Maclean and Jane Henderson, grandchildren of Mrs. Crombie of Govan.

Right : Spectators at the arena, l. to r. : Miss Denham, Mr. Alan Godsal, the Hon. Mrs. Bruce and Lord Glentanar.

Centre, left : Lord Huntly presented the Chief's Challenge trophy to stalwart former Dundee policeman George Clark, best all-round competitor.

Centre, right : At the Braemar Gathering two judges, Mr. Angus McPherson and Mr. Donald MacLean, listened contentedly as, piping with confidence and skill, young Adrian Mackintosh of Corpach marched up and down before them during the Boys under Twenty-one Piping competition. *Photographs of their Majesties and Princess Margaret at Braemar and Aboyne appear on pages 288-289.*

HIGHLAND FLING.

SEPT. 7.

BEST BOY — BEST TEAM.

Pony Club championships, finals of Inter-Branch and Advanced competitions were held at Ingestre Hall, Stafford. Left : Derek Crossman of the Berkeley Hunt, on Mermaid, won the Cup for the Best Boy Rider (Inter-Branch) ; was congratulated by Lord Shrewsbury. Right : The winning Wilton Hunt team (Basingstoke Area Competition)—891 marks—with their Cup, l. to r. : Marella Hosie on Flying Fancy, Annette Gibson on Tara VII., and P. Bennett on Truant—she also holds her own Cup for highest individual score.

BEST BOY — BEST TEAM

Social

SEPT. 10.

SMYTH — AUBREY-FLETCHER WEDDING.

Big wedding in Crypt Chapel of House of Commons was that of Mr. Algernon Smyth, son of Captain C. Devaynes Smyth, of Westwood, Ascot, and of the late Mrs. Devaynes Smyth, to Miss Elizabeth Aubrey-Fletcher, daughter of Sir Henry and Lady Aubrey-Fletcher, of Townhill, Chilton Aylesbury, Bucks. For some years Parliament has been background to the pair, who met there two years ago, for the bride was secretary to Sir Frederic Metcalfe, Clerk of the House of Commons, while her groom, as secretary to Sir Robert Overbury, has been her opposite in the Lords. Her little bridesmaids were Ladies Louisa Cathcart and Lucinda Mackay ; her page, Robert M. Preston. The reception was held on the terrace of the House of Lords.

Top left photograph shows the bride arriving in Palace Yard with Richard Cœur de Lion for décor, with her father, Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher. A tulle veil flowed over her elegant dress of white and silver brocade.

Top right : *Guests on the terrace, l. to r., were : Mrs. Mark Baring, Mrs. Michael Hamilton and Major and Mrs. David Callander.*

Centre : *The newly-marrieds cut the cake at the reception.*

Below, left : *Clockwise round the table on the terrace overlooking the river, l. to r. : Mrs. Basil Eugster, Lady Cathcart, Mrs. Michael Price, Lord Cathcart, who was best man, Wing-Commander G. L. Sinclair, Mrs. Julian Berry, Caroline Berry, and Lady Louisa Cathcart, a bridesmaid.*

Below, right : *In the august precincts of government, guests made their way to the long buffet after the ceremony, at which the Dean of Hereford officiated.*

SMYTH — AUBREY-FLETCHER WEDDING

Diary

SEPT. 10.

THE FIRST AMERICAN . . .

Golfers at Royal and Ancient Jubilee Vase tournament, St. Andrews, l. to r.: Mr. Francis Ouimet, captain-elect of the R. and A. Golf Club—first American ever to captain this famous Golf Club; Lord Simon; Sir George Cunningham; Mr. Dennis Kyle.

SEPT. 11.

DUTCH-FRENCH WEDDING.

Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands was at wedding of brother, Prince Ernst Aschwin zur Lippe-Biesterfeld, to Mme. Simone L. Watzdorf, at Caxton Hall. Prince Ernst is curator of a New York museum.

THE FIRST AMERICAN . . .

DUTCH-FRENCH WEDDING.

SEPT. 12.

DONCASTER.

At Tattersall's Bloodstock Sales, the bidding was hot for a brown colt by Nearco–Ferry Pool from Sezincote Stud. He went to America, bought by Mr. Jack Ryan for 8000 guineas; fetching the highest price of the day. Left-hand picture: breeder Mr. G. A. Harris, Mr. Clive Graham, and buyer Mr. Jack Ryan. Right: going through the catalogue (centre) Newmarket trainer Mr. R. J. Colling, with his wife on the left and, right, owner Mrs. D. Mackinnon.

DONCASTER.

SEPT. 19.

BALMORAL SOUVENIR.

This picture arrived from Balmoral where, during their stay, the King and Queen received a party of Royal Canadian Air Cadets, and chatted with them. Photograph, which includes Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret and the Duke of Edinburgh, with Mr. Donald MacLaren, D.S.O., M.C., of Vancouver between them, was taken on the suggestion of their Majesties, so that the cadets might have a souvenir of the occasion.

BALMORAL SOUVENIR.

Social Diary (Abroad)

PRINCELY WEDDING.

IN YUGOSLAVIA.

SEPT. 4. PRINCELY WEDDING.
Prince Ernst August of Hanover, descendant of Queen Victoria, and Princess Ortrud, daughter of late Prince Albert of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksberg, married at Marktkirche, Hanover.

SEPT. 11. IN YUGOSLAVIA.
When H.M.S. Liverpool called in at Split, Marshal Tito paid his first visit to British warship. L. to r., front: Adm. Sir John Edelsten, C.-i-C. Med., Marshal Tito, Vice-Adm. Manola, C.-i-C. Yugoslav Navy, Cdr. J. M. A. Wilson, R.N., Capt. J. D. Lucas, Liverpool's C.O.

VENETIAN PREMIERE.

SEPT. 11. VENETIAN PREMIERE.
World-famous composer Igor Stravinsky scored resounding success at world-première of his new opera, The Rake's Progress, at Teatro La Fenice. Himself conducted the La Scala Milan company. Carl Ebert produced. House brilliant with international celebrities. Subject was suggested by Hogarth's famous pictures; owes something to Faust.

Picture left shows Stravinsky taking one of many "curtains." Right: Lord and Lady Harewood—never missing from important musical events—arriving.

VENETIAN PREMIERE (contd.)

IN AMERICA.

SEPT. 11. VENETIAN PREMIERE (contd.)
Left: Italian conductor Victor de Sabata, Milan's La Scala Orchestra, congratulated soprano Elisabeth Schwarzkopf on her performance. She sang exquisitely; acted with grace.

SEPT. 12. IN AMERICA.
At La Guardia airfield en route for Colonial Williamsburg, after their tour of Australia, were London's Lord Mayor, Lady Mayoress, Sir Denys and the Hon. Lady Lowson. He showed to Colonial Williamsburg's President, Mr. Kenneth Chorley (left), the State Sword of City of London.

JEAN-LOUIS BARRAULT.

FROM PARIS . . .

One of the most exciting events of the autumn theatrical season is the presentation by Sir Laurence Olivier of five French plays by the Compagnie Madeleine Renaud and Jean-Louis Barrault, from the Marigny Theatre, Paris. They were due to open last night, September 25, at the St. James's Theatre, with Marivaux' *Les Fausses Confidences*, and *Baptiste*—the mime sequence from Barrault's distinguished film *Les Enfants du Paradis*. Their three-weeks season includes Molière's comedies *Amphitryon* and *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, and in M. Paul Claudel's *Partage de Midi* on October 1 Mme. Edwige Feuillère will make her only appearance with this brilliant company.

MADELEINE RENAUD—Barrault's wife and leading lady.

In the arena of the little Deeside village of Braemar the cream of Scotland's dancers and heavyweight athletes competed for supremacy.

(*Left.*)
The Queen presented the Pipe Band championship trophy to Pipe-Major A. McDiarmid of the Glasgow Transport Band. The King, Princess Margaret and Lord Aberdeen looked on.

(*Right.*)
Wee dancing competitors, James Sampson, Murray Gill, and James Herd admired the splendid dress of Drum-Major W. Darwin of the Australian Pipe Band.

ROYALTY ON DEESIDE

The 1951 Braemar Gathering was a great success. Grand weather enabled the Royal party to sit outside the Royal pavilion. An international crowd of 30,000 cheered their Majesties when, headed by seven pipe bands, they arrived at the arena.
(*Right.*) At the Aboyne Ball, highlight of Deeside's season, 300 guests included Princess Margaret, who went in a party with Mrs. Vaughan Lee, of Kincardine House, Kincardine O'Neil. The hall was massed with flowers, and the personal banners of the Aboyne Games patrons draped the walls.

With the King and Queen and Princess Margaret in the pavilion were, left, Mrs. A. A. Farquharson, the Duke of Edinburgh, Lord Aberdeen, and behind his Majesty, Captain A. A. Farquharson of Invercauld.

At the Aboyne Ball Princess Margaret danced a reel. Her white dress sparkled with silver trellis-work ; she wore a diamond necklace

Making for the ballroom, the Princess was accompanied by Sir Francis Grant and Mrs. Vaughan Lee. Behind are seen Mr. A. L. P. F. Wallace and Miss Susan Vaughan Lee.

With a foursome reel in progress, Princess Margaret is seen in the centre of the hall.

Her Royal Highness chatted at the ball with her cousin, the Master of Elphinstone.

Partnered by Sir Francis Grant, Albany Herald, and vice-chairman of the Aboyne Ball, Princess Margaret danced a Petronella.

1.—FLORENCE CHADWICK : For her two-way stretch of the Channel.

WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO . . .

1.—First woman ever to swim the Channel both ways is Miss Florence Chadwick, ex-typist of San Diego, Cal. Last year she swam from France to England in 13 hr. 23 min., and now she has made the return journey—St. Margaret's Bay to Sangatte, 12 miles east of Cap Gris Nez—one of the longest routes ever attempted—in 16 hr. 22 min.

2.—At Doncaster on September 15 W. R. Johnstone on *Talma II* won a ten-length victory in the St. Leger for M. Marcel Boussac. At Longchamp next day on *Stymphale* he won the French St. Leger by four lengths for the same owner, netting altogether £17,500 in prize-money for his owner. Johnstone is the most successful classic jockey since the war ; for M. Boussac it was a memorable week-end.

3.—Owner of a stately home himself (Luton Hoo, Beds.), Sir Harold Wernher (seen with a painting of his famous *Brown Jack*) is out to persuade other owners of mansions, castles, country houses historic, beautiful, to go as a group into the public relations business. It 's to Britain's advantage that these splendid traditional homes should be kept up but financial stringency prohibits it. So if Sir Harold has his way, a City office may soon bear a plate with the words "Stately Homes, Inc." on it.

4.—Stirling Moss flew back recently from Ireland, having won in his XK120 "C" model Jaguar the famous R.A.C. Tourist Trophy race over the Dundrod circuit near Belfast. He set up a record for the race, averaging 83.55 m.p.h. for 318 miles—improving upon his winning speed in this race last year.

2.—RAE JOHNSTONE and M. BOUSSAC : For their joint "Leger-a-day" record.

3.—SIR HAROLD WERNHER : For wanting to launch Stately Homes, Inc.

4.—STIRLING MOSS, Britain's most successful racing driver : For winning the R.A.C. Tourist Trophy for the second successive year in a British car.

Specially photographed for "The Sketch" by Roger Wood.

YODELLING IN MAYFAIR

Visitors to Kitzbühel, winter sports centre in the Austrian Alps, will be delighted to learn that the Tyrolean singers and dancers who entertain so charmingly in Toni Praxmair's popular little bar have just opened a five-weeks season of cabaret at The Washington, Curzon Street. On October 22 they leave to tour America.

The troupe, ten boys and four girls, led by zither-playing Toni Praxmair himself, are guides, ski-instructors, wood-carvers or farmers. The girls are waitresses. Their songs and dances, folklore handed down through generations, refer to the mountains, their farms, flirtations and love affairs, old traditions and ghosts.

One of the highlights of an evening may be the famous "Schuhplattler," a dance which entails a good deal of slapping of thighs and beating of buttocks. In our pictures they are performing the "Watschentanz"—the ear-boxing dance, a merry rough-and-tumble showing how mountain lads enjoy wrestling against each other. Josef Loferer and Konrad Staudinger (right) try out a tricky routine.

PROCESSION: by Ralph Marshall.

THE EQUESTRIENNE; by Vincent M. Hill.

GEORGIAN MINUET; by Harold White, F.I.B.P., F.R.P.S.

THE CHARM OF SYMME

The essence of these two pages of photographs, chosen from the Royal Photographic Society's 96th Annual Exhibition, is the enchantment of pattern, design. The flock of nuns with shining morning faces, the ranks of pottery, the winding trail of elephants, the elegance of the *Georgian Minuet*—a study specially taken for

WARES AT THE POTTERY; by Tsze-Kong Sit, A.R.P.S.

THE EMPTY SEAT; by S. Woodward, A.R.P.S.

ETRY AT THE R.P.S.

The Sketch at York's Georgian Ball this year—and the sweep of a woodland path, all indicate considered and planned (horrid word!) design. The Exhibition, which as always shows work from eminent cameramen in all parts of the world, is held at 16, Princes Gate, S.W.7., and will close on October 14.

THE CIRCUS COMES TO TOWN; by Derek Evans.

The Royal Family of the Theatre

By J. C. TREWIN

BEFORE the Queen laid the foundation-stone of the National Theatre in July, Dame Sybil Thorndike spoke the Laureate's Ode : a few unforgettable moments. It was right that she should have done this. Dame Sybil, besides being at the top of her profession, one of the best-loved actresses in the theatre, is also a head of the Casson-Thorndike family, safe in stage record as one of the most remarkable families of its time.

The names of Dame Sybil and Sir Lewis are known where the English stage is known. Dame Sybil's younger brother and sister, Russell and Eileen, are also eminent in the profession. Their youngest brother, Frank, killed during the First World War, was an actor of high promise. To-day, another generation of Cassons and Thorndikes is adding to the roll.

These younger members are not anxious to make capital out of their name. Although there is no more united family, no Casson or Thorndike clings obstinately to the family tree : all wish to be accepted in the theatre on their own merit. They need not fear. Players of such a strain as this can hardly fail.

How did it start ? Dame Sybil, born in 1882, was the daughter of a canon. She was brought up at Rochester and intended for a musical career. For a time she was engaged as a pianist—observe her playing now in the second act of *Waters of the Moon*—but, because of wrist trouble, she had to abandon music and take to the stage : something for which the stage is grateful.

In 1903 she and Russell—her junior by a little more than two years—joined the Ben Greet Academy. In June 1904, in a company of Ben Greet pastoral players that also included Matheson Lang, Helen Haye and Nigel Playfair, Sybil Thorndike acted at Oxford in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and a play called *My Lord from Town*. After this, a four-years tour of America with Ben Greet, playing a vast number of Shakespearean and old comedy parts. Some of her letters home to Russell during the first year are published in Russell Thorndike's book on his sister, surely the friendliest, least starched theatrical biography in existence.

" It 's Hamlet I 'm longing to play," Sybil Thorndike wrote in one letter. " It will be just like you to go and get a chance of Hamlet and play it before me."

Russell later joined the company as well : he was in it for three years. When Sybil Thorndike returned home she joined, in the autumn of 1908, Miss Horniman's famous repertory at the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester : here the Thorndike name became known. Some time before going to the Gaiety, and while touring in *Candida*, she met at Belfast a young actor, Lewis Casson, then on tour with the Manchester cast. Sybil Thorndike called him " the prince of the lot." Nigel Playfair introduced them ; but (so she wrote to Russell) " he only barked a sort of huffy how-d'ye-do to me and didn't speak another word." A week later, in Dublin, she met him " in the Lion House at the Zoo . . . standing in front of a tigress trying to hypnotise it."

Presently Sybil Thorndike, as a member of the Gaiety, found herself acting with Lewis Casson. Earlier, on a preliminary tour, he had asked her to marry him (it was in the Kardomah Restaurant at Birmingham " over coffee and toast "), and they were duly married at Christmas.

Those were exciting years in Manchester and in London. In 1910 Sybil Thorndike appeared at the Duke of York's during the Frohman season. Later, after an American interlude, she was, so to speak, one of the leading Gaiety girls (Manchester version) until 1914, creating such parts as Jane Clegg in St. John Ervine's play, and Beatrice Farrar in *Hindle Wakes*. Each of these she did in London as well. Lewis Casson had become producer for the Gaiety : it was a strenuous period.

When the war came, Lewis Casson and Russell Thorndike joined the Army. Sybil went to Ben Greet at a theatre called " The People's Coffee Tavern and Royal Victoria Hall." There, in the now famous Vic, she played for the first time in England Lady Macbeth, Rosalind, Portia, Viola, Constance, Beatrice, Imogen, Prince Hal, Queen Margaret, Mistress Ford, Lady Teazle, Kate Hardcastle, Lydia Languish, Everyman, Ferdinand, Puck, Launcelot Gobbo : a catalogue that only a Thorndike would dare.

She had still to conquer the West End. In 1918 C. B. Cochran engaged her for *The Kiddies in the Ruins*. She acted in Drury Lane melodrama. But it was in *The Trojan Women* (Vic, 1919) that she was first recognised as a great tragic actress. Next year she repeated her performance at (of all theatres) the Holborn Empire. There, too, she played Medea.

All lovers of the theatre know the rest. But the " rest " covers four columns in John Parker's *Who 's Who*. To tell it we should have to take Sybil Thorndike—always with Lewis Casson at her side, acting and producing—through the Guignol seasons, through her work at such opposite ends of the theatrical scheme as Beatrice in *The Cenci* and April Mawne in *Advertising April* (for she was comedienne as well as tragedienne), and on to the run of *Saint Joan*. She created Bernard Shaw's pillar of faith and fire : a noble performance that stands for ever with Sybil Thorndike's name.

After this we can only refer to the records. Shoals of plays and parts : at random, *Granite* ; *Major Barbara* ; much Shakespeare ; someone called Lady Bucktrout (in a play by Robert Morley) ; a majestic Volumnia—with Olivier's Coriolanus—at the Vic ; Miss Moffat in *The Corn is Green*. Then the war years. Sybil Thorndike was ready to tour the remotest mining villages of Wales (her name is reverenced now in those fastnesses), playing one-night stands in *Medea* and *Macbeth*, and throwing in one of the Witches, as well as Lady Macbeth, for the fun of the thing. She has never lost her trouping enthusiasm : there was never a less temperamental star.

The tale goes on. In recent years we remember her cosy fantast in *Treasure Hunt* ; her Foolish Gentlewoman ; her superb tragic sweep in the Siddons part of Lady Randolph in the Edinburgh *Douglas* ; and, most recently, her study of the lonely widow in *Waters of the Moon*. For twenty years she has been Dame Sybil (created in 1931), and among her other honours she holds the Freedom of the City of Rochester : honour in her own country. She has always had the Freedom of the Theatre : she is Sybil Thorndike, a great actress and a great personage of her time.

Lewis Casson, seven years older than his wife, is similarly honoured. He has been with her in most of her major productions, many of which he produced. Always he is a fine actor, an artist of integrity, a statesman of the stage. He was knighted in 1945. In 1947 he created memorably the unspectacular but subtly expressed Professor Linden in Priestley's *The Linden Tree* (Dame Sybil as his wife). Now he is the loyal Antigonus in *The Winter's Tale*, the play in which, nearly half-a-century ago, he made his first professional appearance, as Polixenes.

The Casson children have carried the torch. John, the eldest, now producing in Australia, was a naval officer : later he made his name as producer at Glasgow's Citizen's Theatre. Christopher has had a notable acting record (at the Vic and in Dublin, for example) ; and the daughters, Mary—who has now left the stage, and who was married to the actor William Devlin—and Anne (whose husband, Douglas Campbell, is this year's Vic Othello) have finely sustained the Casson-Thorndike name in all manner of parts. It was a night of excitement when Anne, at Hammersmith in 1946, played the Electra of Euripides.

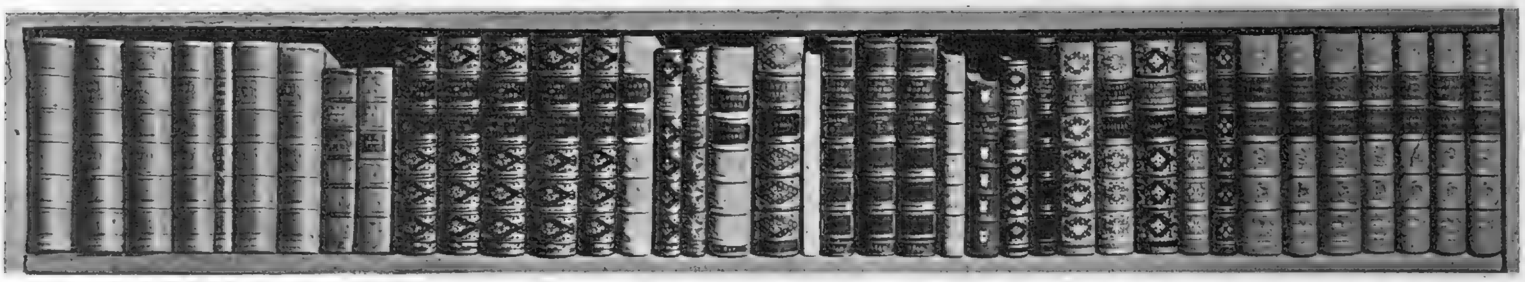
Russell Thorndike (born in 1885), like his sister, has a vast relish for the theatre theatrical. He has tackled most things between Hamlet and Launcelot Gobbo. I saw him a year or so ago as Molière's imaginary invalid in an Arts Council company at Chelmsford (it included his daughter Georgia), and he burnt up the Institute stage with the explosive gusto of his performance. He writes excellent novels—ventures in the *macabre*. I saw him as his own Dr. Syn, the Dymchurch-under-the-Wall parson-cum-pirate, in a production years ago, that must have invigorated anyone with a spark of the theatre in him. Russell Thorndike has more than a spark : it is a bonfire.

Eileen, the younger Thorndike sister, learned her craft in the Repertories of Manchester and Liverpool. She, too, knew the quality of Ben Greet. For several years in the 'thirties she was the principal of the Embassy School of Acting, and since the war we have seen her many times and never without reward. I remember her best as the wife, a beautifully expressed part, in Priestley's fated *Summer Day's Dream*. She has the Thorndike qualities, strong sensibility and an unwavering attack.

And so we go forward. Russell Thorndike married an actress, Rosemary Filippi : their children, a son and three daughters, are all players. So is Eileen Thorndike's daughter. We may be sure that in another generation yet the Thorndikes and Cassons will still be burnishing their famous names : names that come straight from the Theatre Royal of the British Stage.

Specially photographed for "The Sketch" by Harold White.

The heads of the Casson-Thorndike family are in conference in Dame Sybil's dressing-room at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, where she is appearing now in *Waters of the Moon*. From left to right: Russell Thorndike, Eileen Thorndike, Dame Sybil Thorndike and Sir Lewis Casson.



OUR BOOKSHELF

by RUPERT CROFT-COOKE

THE END OF THE AFFAIR. By Graham Greene. (*Heinemann ; 10s. 6d.*)

THE MASTERS. By C. P. Snow (*Macmillan ; 12s. 6d.*)

THE WEST PIER. By Patrick Hamilton. (*Constable ; 12s. 6d.*)

LETTY LANDON. By Helen Ashton. (*Collins ; 10s. 6d.*)

HERE are four very able novels by writers as sincere and practised as we have, all of them well written, all of them about rather dull or frankly odious people, yet all stimulating and easy to read. Mr. Graham Greene's new book, *The End of the Affair*, is the most disappointing of them, a rather dreary love-story which develops into a startling piece of mysticism with a couple of miracles thrown in. Maurice Bendrix has a long, adulterous love-affair with Sarah, the wife of a stereotyped civil servant called Henry Miles. During an air-raid Sarah believes Bendrix dead, and promises God that if he lives she will renounce him. Bendrix, meeting Henry some time afterwards, gathers that the solid, unimaginative man now, when it is too late, suspects Sarah, and has even gone to the length of obtaining a private detective's address. It is Bendrix who sets the detective, a maudlin creature called Parkis, who works with his small son, to the job of following Sarah and finding out the truth. After many spiritual questionings, she repents her sins and dies of pneumonia, but certain relics, a book and a lock of hair, which she has left, produce miraculous cures for the detective's son and a proselytizing atheist called Smythe. Bendrix is left, sour and inconsolable, feeling that he is the victim of a conspiracy between Sarah and her God and asking only to be allowed to hate everything in peace. The story is impregnated with a stuffy and suburban odour of sanctity and none of its characters is even faintly likeable. Yet Mr. Greene keeps his reader safely buttonholed to the last.

MR. C. P. SNOW'S characters have the jaundiced and emasculated dullness of pedagogues. To meet them in person would be misery, to follow them in this story, with its remarkable suspense and highly entertaining revelations of donnish life, is delightful. The theme of the book is a simple one—the Master of a Cambridge college is dying of cancer and, although he has not been told this, his colleagues know that he has a short time to live and that, before long, they will be called on to elect his successor. This brings about an atmosphere of gentlemanly intrigue, of conscience-searching, of righteous ambition, of partisanship and occasional hostility. Gradually the issue takes shape—it is to be Paul Jago, the good, artless, warm-hearted man with the "unsuitable" wife, or the less amiable but perhaps more reliable Crawford. With gathering momentum the crisis of the election approaches and we come to know intimately each of the fourteen voters. There are no villains here, no common opportunists; all are scholarly, decent men who, while swayed as voters are by events and rumours, seriously try to sort out the rights and wrongs for the best of the college. The reader may grow at times exasperated by the deadly earnestness of this small circle, by the way in which all issues of the world at large are subordinated to this one, since no one in the book seems to doubt for a moment that the Mastership of a college is man's ultimate and most-to-be-coveted aim. The reader might even wonder whether the author himself does not share this view. But exasperated or not, he will follow the battle almost breathlessly to the day of the election and will want to take sides and cast his vote then, so skilfully does Mr. Snow make real the opponents and their respective supporters.

MR. PATRICK HAMILTON is deliberately creating a villain in *The West Pier*, and warns us in an Author's Note that this is but the first of a series to deal with the career of a certain Ernest Ralph Gorse. It is true that this novel is complete in itself, but it leaves one a little unsatisfied, for it is full of forebodings and hints of the frightful iniquities which lie ahead, suggestions that Gorse may develop into something quite unprecedented as a criminal, easily surpassing minor miscreants like Heath, Charles Peace, Jack the Ripper and Brides-in-the-Bath Smith, whereas in this book the record of his boyhood offences, while it is nasty enough, gives only promise of his future perfidy. After some light sketches of Gorse at school, we see him with two friends on the West Pier at Brighton, and watch them pick up a couple of girls. Thereafter we watch Gorse securing Esther, the better-looking of the two, stubbing out by cunning and blackmail the more genuine affection she has formed for one of Gorse's friends, doing an elaborate business in anonymous letters and finally mulcting her of the whole of her savings. He does this so exhaustively that, on the afternoon when he is to leave her for London, he borrows the last three pounds she has in her bag so that she cannot even pay for the tea they have had together. A mean and thorough blackguard and yet, as Mr. Hamilton shows, successful in his dealings with certain women, his career in the sequels to *The West Pier* should provide this author with splendid opportunities to show his keen knowledge of crime psychology. But the book has neither the sparkle nor the humanity of Mr. Hamilton's fine novel, *The Midnight Bell*.

MISS ASHTON makes of her heroine *Letty Landon* a woman so uninteresting and silly that even Letty's mild successes and fame seem inexplicable, yet we read this biography converted to the form of a novel with a good strong what's-on-the-next-page kind of avidity, a double tribute to the author's skill. Letitia Elizabeth Landon is not perhaps quite so obscure a figure even to-day as Miss Ashton believes and was not in her own time such a fluttering and shallow creature as she is made to appear. Steel engravings of the time show an extravagantly pretty face, and intelligent men and women were not lacking who took her seriously. After her mysterious death in West Africa, as Miss Ashton points out, Landor wrote an elegy on her, John Forster mourned her, and Bulwer Lytton's wife swore that she had been her husband's mistress, while a great number of people were angry, suspicious or sorrowful at her sudden death by poisoning. It is hard to believe that the vapid little old maid who is the heroine of this book could have roused any of this. But whether or not the Letty Landon we meet here bears anything more than an outward resemblance to the true L.E.L., the events of her life are truthfully told, and we catch glimpses of literary figures of the period which enliven the whole—"a gaunt, grumbling oddity from Dumfriesshire, a philosopher and German scholar called Thomas Carlyle," "a broad-shouldered fresh-coloured fellow, more than six foot tall, with a big head of curling hair and a broken nose" whose name was William Makepeace Thackeray, and "the hungry moody son of a Lincolnshire parson," Alfred Tennyson. Miss Ashton, without any tiresome display of learning, evokes her period and its people.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

THE CRUEL SEA.
By Nicholas Monsarrat. (*Cassell ; 12s. 6d.*)

A very able and thorough but not deeply inspired picture of the war in the Atlantic as it was experienced by the crews of a frigate and a corvette. The characters are made distinguishable, the events are real, and the dangerous, long struggle provides perpetual suspense. A good book on a theme which deserves a great one.

THE CHARLIE TREES.
By B. Dew Roberts. (*Chatto and Windus ; 10s. 6d.*)

Jacobites de-glamourised. A good, credible novel which traces events up to the outbreak of the '45.

STRICTLY FOR CASH.
By James Hadley Chase. (*Hale ; 9s. 6d.*)

The mixture very much as before—perhaps a mite more fiery and effective.

FIRE DOWN BELOW. KNOCK FOUR TIMES.
By Margaret Irwin. (*Chatto and Windus ; 7s. 6d. each.*)

Two volumes in the welcome Uniform Edition of Miss Irwin's novels.

NECK AND NECK.
By Leo Bruce. (*Gollancz ; 9s. 6d.*)

Sergeant Beef solves a dual murder mystery.

DRESS REHEARSAL.
By Monica Stirling. (*Gollancz ; 10s. 6d.*)

Described as a "fictitious autobiography," this is full of intimate family jokes and quips and whimsies and whatnot as its heroine, the daughter of a stage family, giggles her way through school. All right if you are in the mood for it.

I MARRIED A DINOSAUR.
By Lilian Brown. (*Harrap ; 12s. 6d.*)

Adventures in India and Burma by the wife of a palæontologist called Barnum. There is a Foreword by Roy Chapman Andrews who says: "'Pixie' was the name Barnum Brown used for his wife and after you have read her story you will agree that it was well chosen." I certainly do.

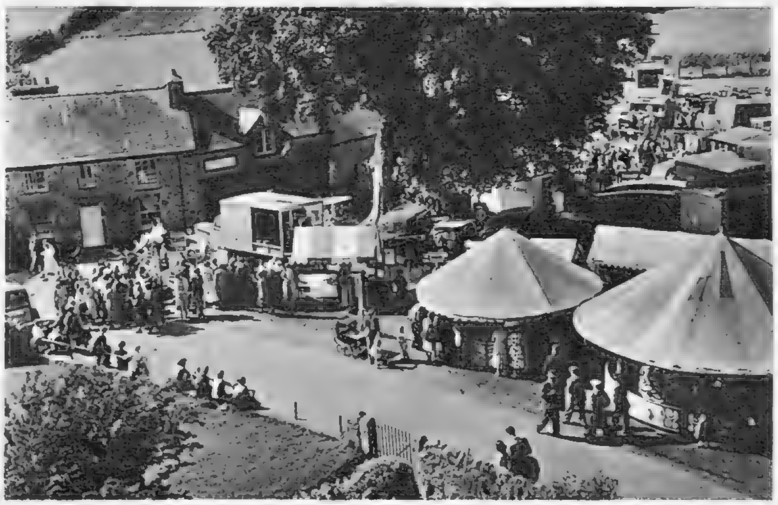
AT WIDECOMBE FAIR

Famous for its Devonshire beauty, its traditional song, Eden Philpotts' novels, and especially its Fair—attended this year by thousands of visitors—Widecombe's latest claim to fame is the fact that it is scheduled to be included in the Dartmoor National Park. The area comprises approximately 365 square miles, all in Devon, and includes the whole of Dartmoor Forest and the townships of Buckfastleigh, Moretonhampstead and Widecombe.

Photographed by A. Vincent Bibbings.

Whoa! The old grey mare took fright. Like her counterpart in the song, she "appears gashly white."

"Tom Pearce, Tom Pearce, lend me your grey mare,
All along, down along, out along lee;
For I want for to go to Widecombe Fair."



Bird's-eye view of the stalls, the tents, the roundabouts.

All the fun o' the Fair, "Wi' Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney, Peter Davey, Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawk, Old Uncle Tom Cobleigh and all."

Here 's the real Fair, with the show-ring for ponies, sheep and other agricultural classes, with the sports field and car park in the shadow of Honeybag Tor and Clinkwell Rock.

AT THE THEATRE . .

West End Favourites

SEAGULLS OVER SORRENTO
(Apollo).

The Royal Navy is still in charge of a lump of rock in the Orkneys that, by the author's whim, is called Sorrento. Hugh Hastings' play joins melodrama to flash-bang nautical back-chat. The union is cunning; we understand why the piece, with Ronald Shiner as a needle-sharp Cockney and William Hartnell as a petty officer with a touch of Simon Legree, has run at the Apollo since June 1950.

HIS HOUSE IN ORDER
(New).

No one in our theatre could make more of Sir George Alexander's part of Hilary Jesson than Sir Godfrey Tearle does now in an expert revival. Pinero was a dramatist with pride of craftsmanship: he never dreamt of scamping any detail or of turning out some boneless, formless travesty of a play. This Edwardian prize is the story of a humiliated second wife, Nina Jesson, who finds that she can wreck the legend of the paragon who preceded her. Mary Kerridge is the Nina, and Sir Godfrey Tearle her quietly reasoning brother-in-law.

GAY'S THE WORD
(Saville).

This is the musical play in which someone asks, "Must mullets make vultures wonder?" I leave you to find out why. Anyway, no one is likely to wonder about the success of a musical that has an Ivor Novello score, Alan Melville lyrics, and Cicely Courtneidge of the upward-tilting voice to hurtle through it as a character called Gay who sings a song called "Vitality." There you are. Gay's the word.

RELUCTANT HEROES
(Whitehall).

It is more than a year since Colin Morris's farce first showed to the West End its three recruits and its empurpled sergeant-major. "You're-in-the-Army-now" is the theme of an affair that does not pretend to be other than an elongated music-hall sketch.

THE LOVE OF FOUR COLONELS
(Wyndham's).

Peter Ustinov has a charming way with play-titles. I believe that one to come is *King Lear's Photographer.* Here, at Wyndham's, the four Colonels are British, French, American and Russian. They are in Occupied Germany and they seek to wake the Sleeping Beauty in her enchanted castle. It is a cheerful beginning to a play that develops into a set of parodies of Shakespeare, Marivaux, Saroyan and Tchehov, and gives any number of chances to the adaptable Mr. Ustinov himself, Moira Lister, Gwen Cherrell and Colin Gordon. There is no more original fancy in London.

★ First Choice ★

SAINT'S DAY

(Arts Theatre Club)

THIS is the First Choice of Christopher Fry, Alec Clunes and Peter Ustinov, judges in the Arts play competition. It is also the Last Choice of most of my colleagues: I cannot readily recall a play of serious intention so derisively received. What, it is said, must we think when, from 999 entries, the Arts has to give its laurel to this? I gather that the raven mopes above our dying Drama.

Even so, I cannot join the mourners. *Saint's Day* is palpably imperfect: a piece that wanders into the mist. But I remember West End successes less rewarding than this "flop": once more a grim third act has clouded the memory of a promising first. The trouble with Mr. Whiting is his obscurity; there he has no excuse. A dramatist must explain himself, and I cannot probe the deeper meaning (if any) of *Saint's Day,* or guess the implications of the title, the name—Paul Southman—of the principal figure, and the fact that the action passes on January 25, anniversary of St. Paul's conversion. The third act finds us in a mist that thickens to the end. The odd thing is that I remember the play as a vivid dream, a distorted, lurid dream that seems to colour the world when one is awake. Analyse the third act: it becomes nonsense. Yet, if John Whiting has not brought off what he intended, he does prove his command of atmospherics. His mist shines with a strange, coppery glow. Eight days after seeing the play I can feel its inexplicable power. Often it embarrasses. Still, I cannot believe that a dramatist with Whiting's gift for creating character, and his way of framing a theatrical situation, can be accounted a dead loss.

The scene is a house somewhere in the country. Paul Southman, famous and ill-used poet and pamphleteer long in "exile," has become a Grand Old Man. Now, near senility, he reminds himself—in the *Alice* phrase—that he was "a real turtle once." The first act, in which a young critic comes to take Paul to a London ceremonial banquet, is boldly done: Michael Hordern establishes the old giant at once. Then Mr. Whiting slides into a private world. By accident the visitor kills Paul's granddaughter. Three dangerous Army deserters arrive. The village is fired and a grotesque clergyman trapped in his blazing church. Paul and his grandson are taken to be hanged. Where exactly are we?

The Arts production is able, the performance in keeping. The play? There's the rub. But, in spite of my colleagues, I shall not call the evening lost. Wait a bit! . . . We shall hear from John Whiting again.

GRIFF at 'Saint's Day'

. . with J. C. TREWIN

(Arts Theatre)

TEN-FIFTEEN

(Irving Theatre)

THE Irving Theatre Club is in Irving Street, just off Leicester Square. Its stage comes to life nightly at ten-fifteen with the sort of quick-flip pocket revue that is presumed to suit that time of the evening. This will be a very pleasant theatre when its seats are anchored more firmly and cease to slither about the floor. But maybe that adds to the genial charade-quality of the entertainment. This can often beguile. I like Betty Marsden's writhing-in-coils as a serpent of the beauty parlour; Gabrielle Brune sings of "Mr. Henderson"; and a trio called "Persian Desertion" has a topical gloss. Like so many of these small revues, 10.15 does not fix itself in memory. It is there to pass the time. During its progress we note the librettists' resource (or lack of it), genuine invention here, a bit of slyboots nudging there. Next morning the programme can mean little. It is a list of crossword clues. What was "City Tragedy"? Who were "Sob Sisters"? Don't bother. Peter Myers and Alec Grahame, the authors, know their form of ephemeral, lightning-sketch fooling, and a cast of eight strokes us along towards midnight. Humphrey Lestocq has a good deal to do: he does it briskly.

★

LESLIE WELCH

(Palladium)

MR. WELCH is not at the top of the Palladium bill. No doubt I should be writing of Gipsy Rose Lee's strip-tease act (spare me, if you don't mind), or—in a happier mood—of Ted Ray's comedy, the exuberance of Les Compagnons de la Chanson, and Hazel Scott's dexterity at the piano. Rather than these, I would like to offer a sprig or so of laurel to Leslie Welch, one of the amiable people Variety throws up now and again.

He is just a large, friendly fellow who happens to remember in detail most sporting events since Ben Hur's chariot race. Clearly he has soaked in statistics like an eager sponge; twice nightly at the Palladium he waits to be squeezed. Ask him any preposterous question. After a second's premonitory rumble, the oracle will speak: "Who won the Popplewell Plate at Kettering in 1853, sir? Popplewell Plate? Let me see, sir, that would be Dragoman; Lord William, second; Eastern Star, third. Time, two minutes, one second. Ten runners, sir. It was a drizzling afternoon, but it cleared by tea-time. That right, sir?" Almost invariably it is. Once in an evening you may catch Mr. Welch; but he will rally by reciting to you the Derby County elevens since the Flood, or by quoting a few pages of *Wisden*. He is happy in his work; we sit in bemused wonder. Thank you, sir. Quite right.

Plans for the Future

Noël Coward's new comedy, *Relative Values*, set in a Kent country house, begins a pre-London tour at Newcastle on October 15. Gladys Cooper, Angela Baddeley, Judy Campbell, Maxwell Reed, Ralph Michael and Richard Leech head the cast. Michael Relph is the designer, and Mr. Coward himself produces.

FAMILY MATTER.

An Irish Catholic and an Irish Protestant have collaborated in the writing of a play called *A Priest in the Family* (Westminster, October 3). Kieran Tunney had the idea when he noticed in a Cork inn a young priest who, according to the barmaid, had no vocation for his office but had been urged to it by his mother. Tunney told his Protestant friend, John Synge, a great-nephew of the Irish dramatist; they evolved a play about a domineering mother whose ambition was to have "a priest in the family." Tunney says: "I don't think our play will upset devout Catholics." The cast includes Maire O'Neill, Maureen Delany, Sheila Manahan, Ronald Walsh and Joseph O'Conor; Alec L. Rea and E. P. Clift present the piece and André van Gyseghem produces.

FOUR SEASONS.

A new producing firm, Amphitheatre Limited, presents in the West End next month a play called *All the Year Round*, by Neville Croft. I am told that the author describes it as a play of four seasons; its acts are set in spring, summer, autumn and winter. Frith Banbury and Reece Pemberton (of *Waters of the Moon* fame) are producer and designer; and there is a distinguished cast, with Yvonne Mitchell, one of the finest young dramatic actresses in the theatre; Jean Cadell, Marian Spencer, Frank Pettingell, John Gregson, Rosalie Crutchley and Denis Cannan.

MR. FRY.

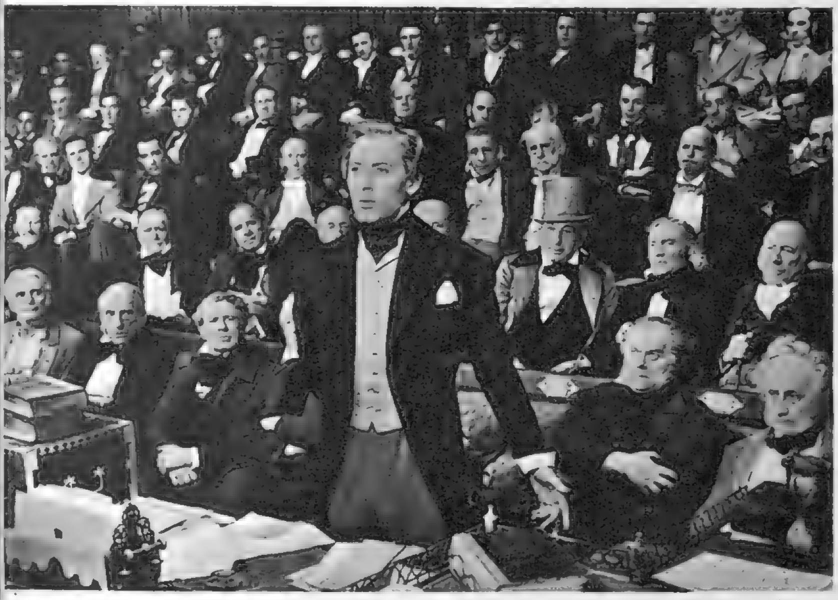
As forecast in *The Sketch*, the St. Thomas's Church production of Christopher Fry's *A Sleep of Prisoners* is to open in New York next month with the original cast. To-morrow (Thursday), Fry's *A Phœnix Too Frequent*, with Diana Churchill, and *Thor, With Angels* (Jack Hawkins, George Cole) form a double bill at the Lyric, Hammersmith, directed by Michael MacOwan.

GETTING AROUND.

South Pacific begins at Drury Lane on November 1. . . . *And This Was Odd* is the title of the Kenneth Horne light comedy for the Criterion on September 26. . . . Agatha Christie's *The Hollow*, after record-breaking at the Fortune, goes to the Ambassadors on October 8. . . . *Man and Superman* ends at the Princes on October 13. . . . Joan Miller appears in David Tearle's *Mrs. Basil Farrington* at the New Boltons on October 1.

1 Florence Nightingale (Anna Neagle), born to wealth, ease, elegance, cared nothing for society. At eighteen a "secret call from God" convinced her that her life must be dedicated to the nursing profession, at that time rife with prostitutes and drunkards.

2 Some years later at a dinner party in the house of her father, a familiar friend of leaders of the Whig aristocracy, Florence puts forward her case for organising a unit of nurses to go to the Crimea. Only Sidney Herbert, a young M.P., is considerate to her suggestion.



3 In the Commons, Sidney Herbert (Michael Wilding), Lord Pembroke's brilliant son, pleads for the support of Miss Nightingale and her nurses. Members reject his explanation for the conditions in the Crimea, where Britain has sent help to Turkey fighting the Russians.

THE LADY WITH A LAMP

Florence Nightingale's Great Cause Assisted by a Film

One of the last public appearances of Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh arranged before they sailed for Canada was the London première of Herbert Wilcox's film, *The Lady With a Lamp*, at the Warner Theatre, Leicester Square, on September 22. It was the first time that Princess Elizabeth has attended a film première.

At the same time as this London performance was taking place, the film was given premières throughout the British Commonwealth as well as in Edinburgh, Cardiff, Belfast, the Isle of Man and in the Channel Islands. To honour the achievements of Miss Nightingale, the proceeds from all these performances will be devoted to the Royal College of Nursing Educational Fund.

4 Eventually, with the help of the persistent Sidney Herbert, Florence Nightingale arrives in Scutari with her small band of nurses. The lack of medical treatment for British soldiers in the Barrack Hospital has shocked the country.

5 The Battle of Balaclava rages in the Crimea. It is an exceptionally hard winter. To the casualties on the field are added thousands who die from cholera and fever, and medical authorities are faced with an impossible task.

6 Conditions in Scutari Hospital are appalling. Wounded from the battlefront are lying helpless and without attention. At first Dr. Sutherland (Andrew Osborn) refuses to allow the nurses to do more than clean out the wards.

7 Constant appeals by Florence Nightingale, backed by Sidney Herbert at home, bring medical supplies and equipment from England. Now in a clean, well-ordered hospital "the lady with a lamp" wishes her patients a peaceful night.

8 Florence Nightingale herself contracts Crimean fever, but refuses to be sent home. Dr. Sutherland (Andrew Osborn) and Nurse Roberts (Betty Cooper) care for her in the hospital.

9 Mr. Gladstone (Arthur Young) addresses the Cabinet at 10, Downing Street, to suggest an official reception for Miss Nightingale after her magnificent war work. Plans are made for the nation to receive her in a blaze of glory.

10 With the declaration of peace, Florence Nightingale returns home, but travelling under an assumed name, she avoids the public reception.

11 Queen Victoria and her Consort (Helena Pickard and Peter Graves) visit Miss Nightingale and agree to set up a Royal Commission to investigate the future of the nursing service.

12 Meanwhile, Sidney Herbert is grievously sick, exhausted from unsparing devotion to his work. Liz Herbert (Rosalie Crutchley) sits by her dying husband who has given so much

13 The news of the death of her life-long friend, Sidney Herbert, is a great shock to Florence Nightingale. Mrs. Bracebridge (Gladys Young) and

14 Miss Bosanquet (Sybil Thorndike), Florence Nightingale's companion, accepts for her the Order of Merit she is too ill to receive herself. Sir Douglas Dawson

TALES WITH A STING

CHANGE FOR A GHOST

By Jane Meredith

MR. FANCOTE had decided he would buy Chandlers from the moment he saw the place. Between driving from the gate to the flagged forecourt he had knocked five hundred off the price the house agent had given him, and built a second bathroom. But his heavy face gave no sign of this as Mrs. Peterson's little maid opened the door to him. His expression was one of slow stupidity: it had been a great asset to him at various times in his career.

He was shown into the pleasant living-room, where Mrs. Peterson greeted him with the over-brightness of a hostess making an effort. She was a fair, slender woman, whose charm middle-age had not dimmed, but Mr. Fancote was not susceptible to feminine charm. Dr. Peterson joined them; he, too, was fair and charming, and a shade too hearty. They were nice people, and this business was strange to them. Mr. Fancote recalculated: eight hundred less than the house agent had said.

Over dinner Mr. Fancote learned that Chandlers had been in Dr. Peterson's family for nearly 500 years. The whole structure was genuinely Elizabethan, while the walled-in garden with the peach-trees was added in the eighteenth century.

"There 's the ghost, too!" cried Mrs. Peterson, and at once both the Petersons relaxed. The ghost was almost a matter of pride, too, but also a family joke. It did not occur to the Petersons that it might deter Mr. Fancote.

"You 'll be sleeping in his room to-night, Mr. Fancote," she went on, relieved at the lightening of her husband's mood. "You *may* see him, if you 're lucky. He tries to hold a conversation, you know."

"Really?" Mr. Fancote was sceptical.

"It 's the ghost of Sir Humphrey Chandler, the owner of this place before we Petersons acquired it," Dr. Peterson explained. "Hence the name."

"*We 've* never seen the ghost," added Mrs. Peterson serenely. "No Peterson ever has, have they, darling? We had a maid once who did, and sometimes a guest, but not often." She hesitated, as if tact made her forbear.

"Fact is," said Dr. Peterson, laughing, "this Sir Humphrey seems to have been a bit of a rogue, and they say he likes a fellow-spirit to have a word with. So perhaps more have seen him than will own up."

Mr. Fancote smiled politely, but there was a faint gleam of interest in his eye.

The bedroom Mrs. Peterson took him to was small and comfortable, made friendly with chintz curtains and a deep armchair, and by the modern divan bed was a table-lamp. Considering everything, Mr. Fancote was glad of the lamp.

He had barely turned off the light, when Sir Humphrey appeared. Indeed, he must only have been waiting for the darkness, for he was already seated in the chintz armchair, with his legs crossed. They were fine legs, in hose. His shirt and doublet were open, and he seemed ready for a chat.

"Well, here you are," began Sir Humphrey genially. "I 've been looking forward to making your acquaintance since I overheard you were coming. We have so many points in common."

Mr. Fancote made a strangled sound.

"We 're both widowers," went on Sir Humphrey, "and our wives died the same unfortunate way."

"My wife died of influenza," croaked Mr. Fancote.

"So they said," agreed Sir Humphrey, "and mine of a fever. In truth, of course, I turned back the clothes and opened the window by her bedside. It was a very cold, wet February . . . Did you speak?"

Mr. Fancote found himself unable to reply.

"There was another small matter," mused Sir Humphrey. "I had a friend once, older than myself, who was kind to me. He lent me money, and gave me his time and his services—but he outgrew his uses. It is easy to ruin the simple-hearted. They blush and stammer as if guilty, and are too ashamed for you, the cause of their downfall, to look you straight in the eye. Did you not find it so?"

"I have only," said Mr. Fancote, recovering his voice, "to turn on the light, and you will be no more."

"That is truer than you think," said Sir Humphrey thoughtfully, "for an idea has occurred to me . . . as we are so alike. I died in my sins at fifty-four—your own age, I believe?—and I wish to atone. Even a ghost may grow weary. Neither heaven nor earth: a sad state."

"Nor hell?" asked Mr. Fancote boldly, his hand groping for the lamp-switch. But Sir Humphrey did not answer him. Instead, he moved over to the bed and sat at the foot, a solid, faintly-illumined figure. Mr. Fancote felt chill. The figure had no weight on his feet.

"I really shouldn't turn the light on, if I were you," Sir Humphrey remarked speculatively.

Mr. Fancote pressed the switch.

The little maid awoke the sleeper the next morning with a cup of tea, and he yawned out of the soundest sleep he had enjoyed for years. Everything seemed delightful to him. He flung the window wide and took deep breaths; he luxuriated in his bath and hummed a little tune quietly to himself. He regarded himself from all angles in the mirror, and spent some time studying his hands.

He went buoyantly downstairs, and surprised his hostess with a smile of the purest goodwill.

"Did you see the ghost, Mr. Fancote?"

He hesitated only a second. "The ghost of Sir Humphrey Chandler? No, dear lady, I did not see him."

"I have been thinking things over," he said to Dr. Peterson as soon as they were all seated for breakfast, "and I have decided that Chandlers must remain in your keeping."

"I am afraid not. We can no longer afford it, Mr. Fancote."

"In your cellar," said his guest, "there are large flagstones. Under the one against the bottom stair is a chest of rare old books. I think collectors would be interested. Also a diary giving a most full and frank account of the misdeeds of the former owner of this manor, Sir Humphrey Chandler. They should prove lucrative in the hands of a good publisher."

"My dear Sir——" Dr. Peterson was at a loss. Mrs. Peterson, bright-eyed, was quicker.

"But how do you *know*, Mr. Fancote?"

"I had a dream," he improvised hastily. After all, it was only a little lie. Even the most straightforward purposes necessitate a little side-stepping.

As he was packing his bag and preparing to leave, the guest discovered a note by his bedside, cunningly folded into a dart.

"You dirty, double-crossing body-snatcher," he read. The rest of it was rather rude.

Downstairs, excited as schoolchildren, Dr. and Mrs. Peterson were dragging an old chest up the cellar steps. Their guest helped them to lift it into the dining-room and take out the books and manuscripts that were inside.

"Really, Mr. Fancote, I can't understand——"

"Think no more of it, Dr. Peterson. A strange dream. That room is undoubtedly haunted." He placed a little paper dart tenderly under a flap in his pocket-book. He smiled knowingly at Mrs. Peterson, who was watching him with interest.

"A small memento, my dear Mrs. Peterson."

"From the ghost?" asked that lady, who had absurd and charming fancies.

But Sir Humphrey avoided her eye. Sometimes the truth is better left unsaid.

Engagements

Anglo-Dutch marriage between British tennis star Jean Quertier and business-man and Davis Cup player Ivo Rinkel, will take place in London in a few months. Miss Quertier, who recently returned from America on the *Queen Mary* with other members of the unsuccessful Wightman Cup team, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. R. O. Quertier, of Wildcroft Manor, Putney Heath, S.W.15. Her fiancé's parents, Mr. and Mrs. L. I. Rinkel, live in Bussum, near Amsterdam He also plays hockey for Holland.

Valerie is the youngest of the five good-looking daughters of the late Mr. Cecil Platt, wealthy sugar planter and cricket enthusiast, and Mrs. Hilda Platt, of Durban, South Africa. In Durban next month she will marry Denis Compton, Middlesex and England cricketer. They will return after their honeymoon to make their home in England.

Jenifer Mary, twenty-one-year-old daughter of Sir Eric and Lady Beckett, of King-o-Mill, Keinton Manderville, Somerset, is engaged to Cecil Francis King, second son of Mr. and Mrs. C. H. King, 109, Cheyne Walk, S.W.3. Jenifer is at Somerville College, Oxford. Her fiancé is with a West African newspaper in Lagos. They hope to marry next year.

Eve, young ballerina daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Trevor Powell, of Oakwood Court, W.14, is engaged to be married on December 8 to Michael Leveaux, M.D., M.R.C.P., younger son of Mrs. Colette Leveaux, also of Oakwood Court. Her fiancé is on the staff of Westminster Hospital.

The Hon. Elizabeth Fitzalan-Howard, granddaughter of the late Lord Fitzalan of Derwent, last Viceroy of Ireland, is engaged to Mr. Vivyan Naylor-Leyland, son of retired diplomat Sir Edward Naylor-Leyland and the late Lady Naylor-Leyland. She is seventeen and a 1951 débutante. Her father, cousin of the Duke of Norfolk, lives at Houghton Hall, Sancton, York. Mr. Naylor-Leyland is 27, was at Eton and Oxford; is a keen skier and polo player. They plan to live in the country.

BEDTIME STORY . . .

Debenham and Freebody

Fenwic

(*Above.*) Deep, cobweb-fine lace graces this dream of a nightdress in peach rayon suzette. From Fenwick's at £7 19s. 9d.

(*Left.*) Slim-waisted, full-skirted housecoat in pastel blue/wine novelty rayon jacquard, with the new shoulder-wide collar-line and fin-like pockets. From Debenham and Freebody at 25½ guineas.

by Ann Murray

FASHION trends in the new season's housecoats show a tendency towards more wrap-over styles. The tailored, narrow waistline, the crisp collar, the shoulder-wide collar, new pocket features, and the full, wide skirt, distinguish the wrap-over garment from the button-through or front-zipping styles which have been so popular over the last two or three years. In rich materials—plain and patterned—the newest housecoats and dressing-gowns are button-trimmed or braid-trimmed, and some are given half-belts at the back. Night-dresses, too, are wide and handsome, with extra swing at the hemline.

(*Right.*) In French rose, a beautifully-shaped, quilted satin, full-skirted dressing-gown ; silk-lined throughout. The fitted waistline has a half-belt at the back. From Selfridge's at £14 15s. 11d.

(*Below.*) For leisurely hours in bed—a luxuriously soft, loose-knit bed-jacket. A contrasting lace-stitch frills the roll collar and turned-back cuffs. From Fenwick's at 39s. 6d.

Fenwick

Selfridge

TWO-WAY CLOTHES

by Ann Murray

FINE BLACK WOOL
—VELVET BUTTONS (left)

Button-through outdoor dress with a plus idea. The braid-trimmed stole with deep, useful pocket is detachable. To ring the changes gaily, take off the stole and button on the checked scarf-apron. A Brilkie model. From Selfridge's, London; Bon Marché, Liverpool. About £7.

Brilkie

Hershelle

STREET VELVET—
JEWELLED BUTTONS (right)

A dress that really looks like a suit. The basque is detachable, as shown in the smaller picture. This street velvet does not spot with the rain. A Hershelle model. About 27 guineas.

Mercia
COUTURE

From the new collection of bridal gowns which Mercia have designed for the coming season

Why not call and discuss the forthcoming wedding with Mercia at 10 Cavendish Place, Cavendish Square, or with any of the exclusive dress houses who stock Mercia models (whose names Mercia will be happy to supply). Original designs for the bride and bridesmaids can then be prepared, choice can be made from our very varied stock of the loveliest bridal fabrics, and all those important accessories, headdresses and the like, can be decided upon. Prices obviously vary in accordance with your choice bridal gowns from 23½ guineas, bridesmaids' dresses from 16½ guineas.

This bridal gown in ivory and gold brocade has the added charm of simple transformation into the full evening gown illustrated

Mercia COUTURE

10 Cavendish Place, Cavendish Square, London, W.1 Museum 5871 (5 lines)

Our Salon is closed on Saturdays

J. B. Priestley's T.V. comedy, *Treasure on Pelican*, shows how eight people, marooned on a Caribbean treasure island, display the worst sides of their natures. The author has no high opinion of any one of his characters.

Arthur Askey refuses to play cricket with the girls unless he is allowed to bat first. Jerry Desmond looks on disapprovingly. An amusing incident during *Holiday Camp.*

Wanda (Cecile Chevreau), Ivan (Lewis Stringer) and Josef (Barry Blake) are three Displaced Persons in *I Was a Stranger*, a play written and produced by Norman Swallow. It tells the story of how Wanda comes to a Rochdale cotton mill and eventually finds happiness with Ivan.

TELEVISION

by CYRIL BUTCHER

IT was left to J. B. Priestley to wind up television's Festival season of drama productions, with his specially-written comedy, *Treasure on Pelican.* As it comes from the pen of one of our five top dramatists, we feel justified in taking rather more space than usual in considering it. But that is not the only reason, and we consider ourself obliged—without any attempt to teach Mr. Priestley his business—to point out several curious omissions in a work by such an able craftsman.

To begin with, he has completely omitted to write a play for *television.* He has ignored the unique possibilities of the medium and produced something which might as easily be done in any of the others: theatre, cinema or radio. That is a pity, for it gives the wrong lead to the lesser lights—who inevitably look to the great luminaries for guidance—at a time when television so desperately needs new authors.

Then, we do not consider Mr. Priestley has played fair dramatically. He takes eight characters—the nucleus of a treasure-hunting expedition: an indigent baronet (Basil Sydney), his married-couple servants (Eileen Beldon and Charles Lamb), the financing Crœsus (Julien Mitchell), his secretary (Barbara Kelly), the technical adviser, ex-naval commander, and his French wife (Clive Morton and Barbara Couper), and a loutish radio expert (Roger Snowdon); he sets them on an uninhabited Caribbean island and for a few minutes lets them enjoy the success of their enterprise with champagne celebration. Then he drops the nigger into the wood pile. The secretary, alone of the party, is not to receive a share of the proceeds from the sale of the treasure, so she administers a devilish drop of poison by asking whether they can trust each other. Mightn't one of them try to steal part of the treasure in order to get just a little bit more?

At that moment the play starts, and for the next two hours Mr. Priestley fascinatingly twists and turns his characters inside out with complete dispassion. He takes no sides and has no high opinion of any of them. Inevitably lust, hatred and greed become so intense that there can be no solution but for everybody to kill everyone else. By themselves the characters have reached a stalemate. But Mr. Priestley must finish his play, and he does so by introducing a naval officer (Terence Alexander) in the last page of the script, who acts as a *deus ex machina,* carting the whole bunch off the island. Apart from showing the omnipotence of the Royal Navy, we consider the author has cheated here.

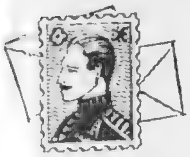
However, it was a fascinating evening, not only for the writing, but even more for the superb performances from the entire cast. Harold Clayton produced, but as the play was largely static, his abilities were never fully extended.

We found Wynyard Browne's *Dark Summer* rather maddening. It so nearly was a great play and yet we were monumentally bored by it. A young R.A.F. officer is blinded in the war; his sight may return and it might not. Meanwhile he is pulled in four different directions by four fussing women. All this involves a lot of talk, and it should be brilliant, taut dialogue. But it wasn't; it was a repetitive jumble of words that simply cried out for the pruning pencil, and we are sorry that producer Cleland Finn didn't apply it. However, there was a most moving performance by Megs Jenkins as one of those poor souls whose spiritual courage can overcome anything, Nazi concentration camp, the war, personal humiliation, except the one thing dearest to a woman's heart—physical attraction.

Looking toward the future, up to Christmas we find little to set the pulse a-flutter. The quarter is dominated by the opening of the new Northern station at Holme Moss, which will be the signal for some ambitious relays from Manchester, Leeds and Blackpool. Light Entertainment has scheduled series by Terry-Thomas, Eric Barker and Wilfred Pickles; and there are to be a number of entertainments featuring star comedians from theatres specially hired for the occasion. Drama is marking time, financially at least, so we must not expect anything in the nature of a lavish Shakespeare production. However, we were glad to hear from Michael Barry that he has found a number of new plays, including the Sherlock Holmes series by C. A. Lejeune, and a programme on the Loch Ness Monster by Duncan Ross of *The Course of Justice* fame.

Henry Mortlake and the air-fare illusion

Henry Mortlake* is an important man. He's a big man in big business who has to travel often and far. He knows that one face-to-face talk



is worth two dozen letters; and often he needs to *see* what overseas offices are up to.

Unlike the majority of his kind, he seldom travels by air. He says it's too expensive. So by *not* flying, Henry saves £50 on his 1,000 mile fare — and wastes £100-worth of his time. (He doesn't even save the whole of that £50 really, because his air-fare would cover all the tips and extras that often add as much as 10% to fares that aren't air-fares !)

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★ AT THE CINEMA ★

with C. A. LEJEUNE

AS a contribution to the Festival season, the British motion-picture industry got together, pooled resources, and made a mammoth film about William Friese-Greene, a British pioneer of the cinema; and the man who, it is now pretty definitely established, produced and patented the first motion-picture camera based on the principles in use to-day.

They called the film *The Magic Box*, and they certainly did it proud as a production. They laid on Technicolor. They persuaded "over sixty British stars" to take part in it. They cast one of our best and most sincere screen actors, Robert Donat, in the leading rôle. Eric Ambler wrote the script, John Boulting directed, and Ronald Neame, himself an expert camera-man and the son of a celebrated photographer, produced the subject. Jack Cardiff, who has been responsible for most of this country's best screen colour-work in the past, was appointed director of photography, and William Alwyn composed the musical score.

The idea was an admirable one, and most appropriate to the occasion, for Friese-Greene was undoubtedly a man of genius, who has never had the honour he deserved, in his own or any other country. The whole thing must have looked quite splendid on paper, and one can understand the industry's enthusiasm. But has it worked out quite so well on celluloid? To my mind, no.

They must certainly have discovered, as soon as they got down to the plotting of the picture, that Friese-Greene's life was dramatically unshapely. All his good luck came to him quite early; when, from being a humble assistant to a Bristol photographer, he came to London and set up a fashionable photographic practice on his own account, and found time, between smart portrait sittings, to carry on the experiments that led him to the invention of the movie camera. After this early triumph, everything went wrong for him. He ran into debt after debt, squandering all his substance on materials for further experiments, particularly experiments for films in colour. His first wife died. His second wife, after many years of this hand-to-mouth existence, struggling to bring up a family in the shadow of the pawnshop, thought it prudent to leave him, and earn her own living. Nobody believed in Friese-Greene, and—the thing that appeared to have hurt him most—his name wasn't even mentioned in the *Encyclopædia*. In May, 1921, he died suddenly, a heartbroken and unrecognised old man, in his seat at the Connaught Rooms during a meeting of the film trade. When they searched his pockets to find some clue to his identity, they discovered a crumpled handkerchief, a pawn-ticket for some cuff-links, and one and tenpence. Nothing more.

Now this is a pretty dismal story to offer as screen entertainment, and there is no chance at all for the three leading players in *The Magic Box* to be anything but dismal, though devoted. Robert Donat plays Friese-Greene with inescapable sincerity, and it is not difficult to believe (as I have been told by people who worked with him on the set) that he took the inventor's troubles to heart as though they had been his own disaster. But he plays him as a Victorian Mr. Chips, rather than as the highly-coloured eccentric that the man must have been. He drearies the thing up by being over-tender. As the two long-suffering wives, Maria Schell and Margaret Johnston have a pretty pallid time. They are allowed about one shot each, in which they can look young and radiant. For the rest of the time, they are in woe, and seem to slip away into the faded pages of some old album.

Under the circumstances, the main brunt of *entertainment* falls on the "over sixty British stars" who appear in supporting parts. The large claim, for once, is almost exactly true. The cast-list reads like a theatrical *Who's Who*. Hardly a name that means anything on British stage or screen is missing. People like Michael Redgrave, Eric Portman, Sybil Thorndike, Stanley Holloway, Michael Denison, Glynis Johns, Emlyn Williams, Margaret Rutherford, Peter Ustinov and dozens more turn up as shopkeepers, doctors, clerks, sitters in a photographic studio, broker's men and cinema veterans.

In what is by far the most successful sequence of the film, Sir Laurence Olivier appears as a bewildered City policeman, dragged off his beat by the inventor in the middle of the night, to form an audience of one at the first public performance of moving pictures. The scene is brilliant, and will probably be remembered long after the rest of *The Magic Box* is forgotten: it is also unselfish, with one of the greatest actors of our time deliberately serving as "feed" to the interests of the story.

But taking it in the round, the introduction of this galaxy of talent has had a very odd effect on *The Magic Box*. It irresistibly distracts attention from the central theme. Dozens of individual "bits" are delightful. The appearance of each favourite is received with yelps of delight from an appreciative audience. *The Magic Box* is as much an occasion as a Theatrical Garden Party. But in the bright company of over sixty stars, all glittering for a fleeting minute, poor Willie Friese-Greene, neglected in his lifetime, bids fair to be passed by again.

Don't let anything detain you from seeing an enchanting little French comedy called *Edward and Caroline*, directed by Jacques Becker, who made *Goupi Mains Rouges* and *Antoine et Antoinette* and the much-talked-of *Rendezvous dé Juillet*, which hasn't had a showing yet in England.

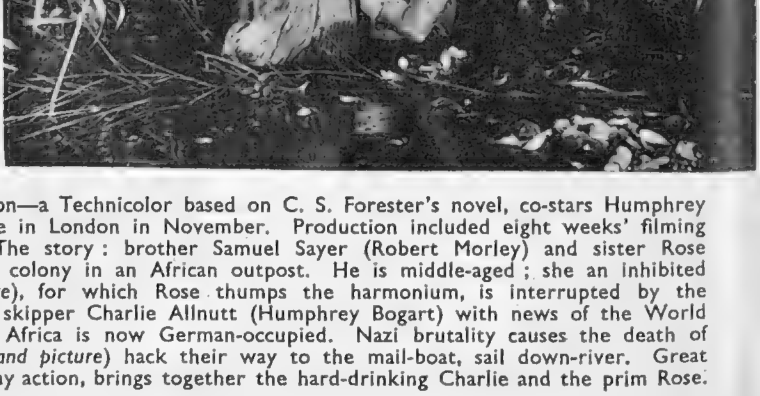
Becker is a post-war French director with a genius for understanding the young mind of to-day. He is never extravagantly *avant-garde*: his modernity is not wilful; he gives you the comforting and proper sense of a fresh generation that has deep roots in the past, however strongly it may shoot away from them.

Edward and Caroline, like *Antoine et Antoinette*, is a sketch of a few harassed hours in the life of a young married couple. The class of the principal characters has been raised a peg, that is the principal difference.

Edward is a young pianist who has married, as they say, "above him." His whole future may depend upon his success at a fashionable soirée, arranged for him by his wife's relations. His wife, Caroline, is a delightful featherhead, who has organised everything about the soirée except her husband's white waistcoat. At the last minute she discovers that she has thrown that away, and from what we can see of the couple's haphazard, untidy life, she has had every reason to.

The trouble over the lost waistcoat is followed by a domestic storm over an evening dress, which Caroline has slashed to the minimum advocated by a fashion magazine. There are tears, tempests, threats of divorce and heart-breaking private crises, which are squeezed over, by the press of time, into calamitous public exhibitions. Edward and Caroline both attend the party; both are bursting with fury; both try to comport themselves like civilised people, and in so doing make fools of themselves and everybody round them.

In the end, of course, they fall into each other's arms; and most satisfactorily, for the real beauty of this film is that it deals with two young people blindly and outrageously in love, and doesn't care who knows it. But before this happy consummation it manages to be witty, smooth, observant and sharp as a needle in pricking out a crowd of characters. All the acting in *Edward and Caroline* is just right: not shoddy, never selfish, but convincing. There is a wonderful American business man, played by William Tubbs (whom you may remember from *Paisà*). There is the smoothest of smooth hosts, played by Jean Galland, in a part that might so easily have been superficial, but isn't. There is Anne Vernon, fresh as sprigged muslin, as Caroline, and Daniel Gelin (remembered from *La Ronde*) as the harassed Edward. Out of a wholly happy film, young M. Gelin registers vividly as one of the most interesting French actors since the war.



PREVIEW:

The African Queen—director John Huston—a Technicolor based on C. S. Forester's novel, co-stars Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn; is due in London in November. Production included eight weeks' filming in the Belgian Congo and Uganda. The story: brother Samuel Sayer (Robert Morley) and sister Rose (Katharine Hepburn) run a missionary colony in an African outpost. He is middle-aged; she an inhibited spinster. The service (*left-hand picture*), for which Rose thumps the harmonium, is interrupted by the arrival of the *African Queen* mail-boat, skipper Charlie Allnutt (Humphrey Bogart) with news of the World War, and the fact that their part of Africa is now German-occupied. Nazi brutality causes the death of Samuel, and Rose and Charlie (*right-hand picture*) hack their way to the mail-boat, sail down-river. Great hardship, with exciting scenes and enemy action, brings together the hard-drinking Charlie and the prim Rose.

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SPEED—AND LEISURE

By William Hartley

MOST of us revel in a real burst of speed, but very few people have anything like the vast practical experience of it that Lieut.-Colonel A. T. " Goldie " Gardner has. He 's been collecting records in his M.G. Special for the last fifteen years and very recently he added more to the total standing in his name.

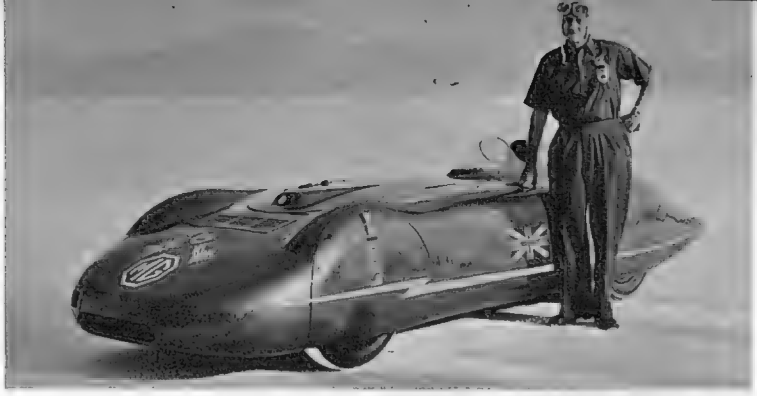
It was in International Class " E " that " Goldie " Gardner had his most recent success at the Bonneville Salt Flats, in Utah. A speed of 135.1 m.p.h. for 100 miles and the figure of 137.4 miles in one hour is no small achievement. To me the most interesting fact is that so many of the parts used in the M.G. engine are standard ones drawn from stock like any ordinary replacement. The whole engine, in fact, is almost a standard T.D. unit with the Shorrock super-charger.

But " Goldie " Gardner's success was short of his target through no fault of his or the car's. It was his intention to attempt to raise the Class " F " (1500 c.c.) record above his own figures of 203.7 m.p.h. for the mile and 204.3 for the kilometre. But trouble with the timing gear needed to log the speed caused delay. " Goldie " Gardner made a warming-up run, but before he could set off on the actual record attempt a deluge of rain put the salt in impossible condition and an end to the attempt. " Goldie " Gardner was, I know, more than disappointed, as during the warming-up run he did well over 160 m.p.h., and he told me that he was confident of reaching his target, basing his confidence on the performance of the car when not warmed up and, of course, not nearly opened up. That he will go to Utah again is certain as anything can be, but when, I don't know. It is not likely to be this year.

NOW to the leisure side. I once thought the very idea of using a caravan quite beyond me. But three years ago I did spend a couple of weeks in one with my family as a new sort of holiday for us. Converted, I look with interest at anything new in caravan design that comes along and also with the more critical eye of a user. Thus I approached the new Berkeley " Statesman " very keenly indeed. Berkeley have certainly stirred the caravan world since the war, as it is only in that short time that they have been building them. And now here they are with, as far as I know, the first " double-decker." The " Statesman " presents new features for the caravanner. He can go upstairs to bed, and he can now leave the bed ready-made all day without the business of getting it out and making it up when ready to go to bed at night. Upstairs there is an ample-sized double bed, with fitted wardrobe and dressing-table to form what is called a complete master bedroom. To me it seemed full of comfort, although I think the roof nearness might worry me, since I suffer to some degree from claustrophobia. I 've had no opportunity to try it out from that point of view, but to clear any doubts let me say that I did prop myself up in the bed and go through the motions of eating my breakfast from a tray; and there was good clearance above my head.

The twin-bedded room below is suggested as a children's room, simply convertible to a day nursery. It would, of course, sleep two adults in full comfort, and it has the advantage of being isolated from the living-room of the caravan by the bathroom—an advantage from the noise point of view, if used by children after they have been tucked away.

For those not used to caravans let me say that the term " bathroom " is not so absurd as you might think. In any caravan there are ample washing facilities, varying according to size. Most large ones, such as this " Statesman," incorporate a shower. Attractive furniture design makes the central living-room very pleasant, too. The makers suggest any car of 20 h.p. or over can tow this caravan. Weighing 42 cwt., I think 20 is perhaps a little low, but large cars will handle it easily. I heard some hopes expressed that people towing them would keep off the roads at busy times, but I cannot see that the double-deck design makes any difference in that respect. After all, width is governed by law, and height does not matter. By the way, the 12′ 3″ will present no obstacle as far as bridges are concerned as long as drivers keep a look-out in odd places. A double-deck bus is 14′ and more. Not that I think many people will spend much time actually towing these " Statesman " caravans about. It represents a first-class alternative to a house for many folk who are homeless. As a week-end or holiday " cottage," it strikes me as a first-class proposition. One can change the parking-spot when weary of one, move from seaside to nearer home country for autumn and early spring, or even winter week-ends. One buys a caravan fully equipped with furniture, curtains, and so forth. No cottage, let alone the necessary furniture, can be bought for anything like the price of this or any other caravan.

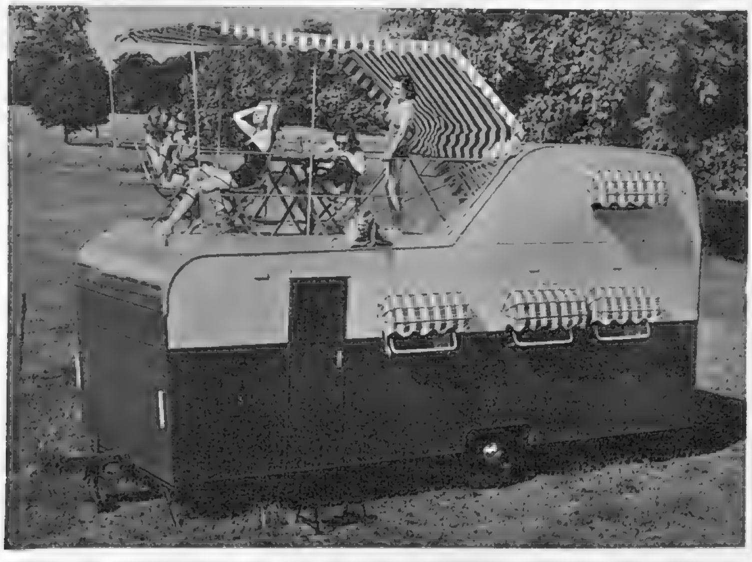


NEW M.G. RECORDS AT BONNEVILLE.

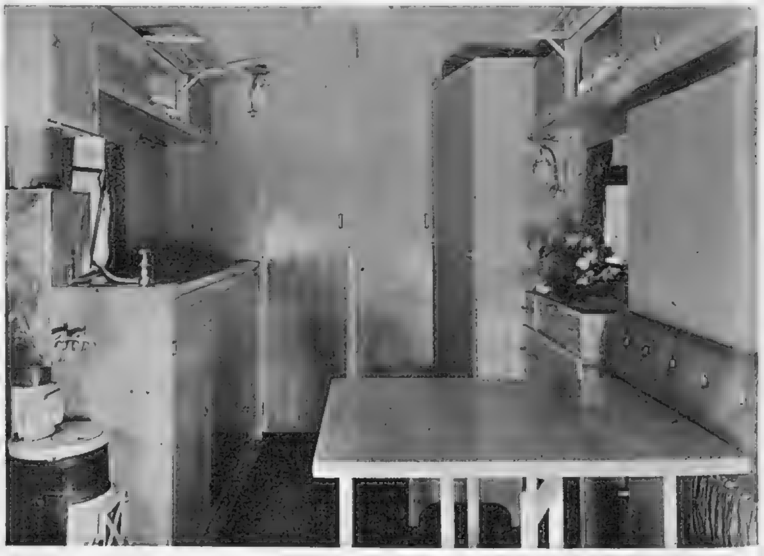
Lieut.-Colonel " Goldie " Gardner with his M.G. at Bonneville Salt Flats, where he recently set up a new one-hour international record at 137.4 m.p.h. (see accompanying article). Within two days of this achievement an ordinary stock model M.G. taken from a local agent's showrooms in Salt Lake City and driven by Dick Van Osten, broke no fewer than 23 American stock records, averaging 75.34 m.p.h. for twelve hours.

I SAID Berkeley were quite a young caravan-making concern. The drive and energy of Charles Panter has certainly brought them a long way in a short time. Another great caravan-maker is W. J. Riley. His company, Eccles, is one of the oldest in the business, and Mr. Riley recently showed me his latest effort. He has called it the Eccles " Adventure." Before showing it to me he described it as a sincere attempt to reach real pre-war quality and standards, and I think he has done that. The " Adventure " is a four-sleeper caravan, with one double bed and another bedroom with either a double or two single beds. Eccles' very long experience always produces little touches that mean so much. The folding double bed, for instance, which goes neatly away in the wall during the day. So that the size of this folding portion can be cut down, it is fitted in conjunction with a full-length settee. Thus the mattress is smaller than normal double-bed size, but you get the full double bed for sleeping, since when ready you use the settee mattress and the bed mattress together, to form a luxurious whole that cannot be spotted as different from a single-piece bed. I think the photograph will show very well how pleasant and roomy is the living-saloon, and it may also show you the general high standard of finish. The coal-fired stove on the left heats ample water in a neat burnished-copper container.

I think there are still many people who have never even thought of using a caravan either for holiday or living. My personal experience is that they do provide a great deal of comfort. I recall trying an Eccles " Advance " last February when frost and fog abounded. I was as warm and snug as in my own home. But so many thousands have taken to caravans to solve the housing problem now, that the idea that they are for summer use only is fast going.



The first " double-decker " caravan—the new Berkeley " Statesman," in which one goes up a staircase to a comfortable double bedroom in the roof. Our photograph shows how one owner has created a lido-like atmosphere with roof and window awnings.



The main lounge of the Eccles " Adventure " caravan, described in the accompanying article. This photograph typifies the clean appearance of this model, and shows the slow-combustion stove which warms the caravan and supplies hot water.

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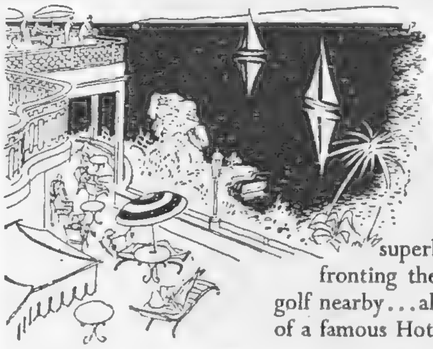

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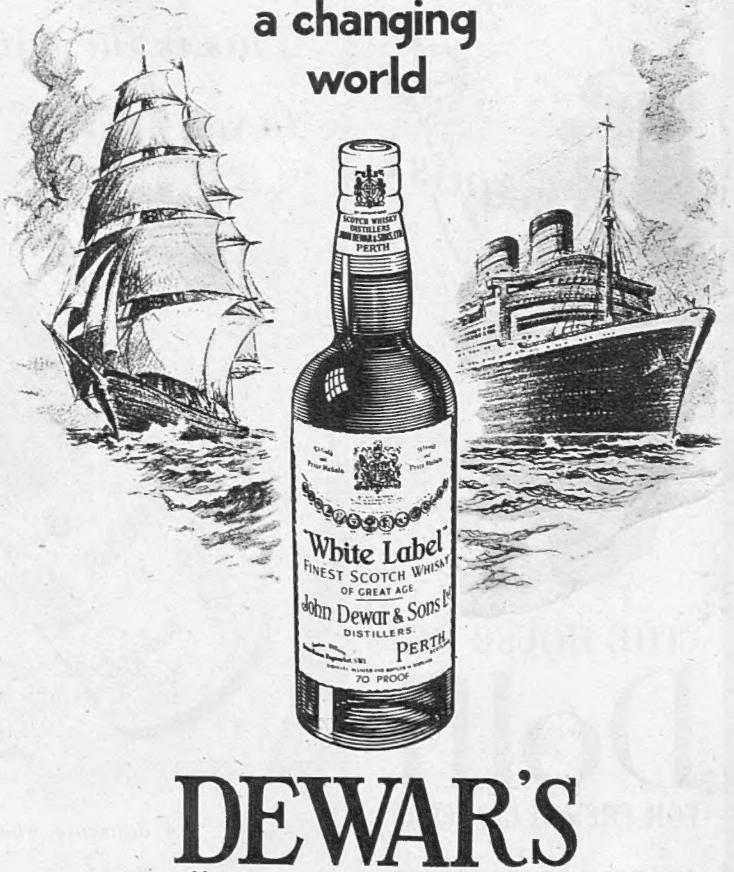

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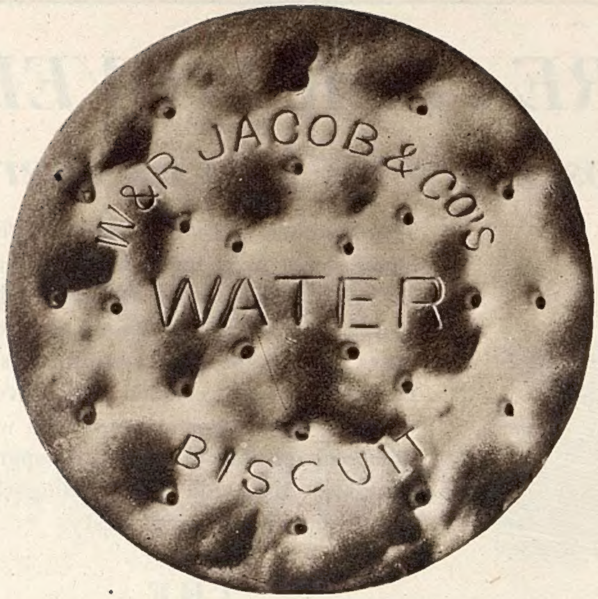

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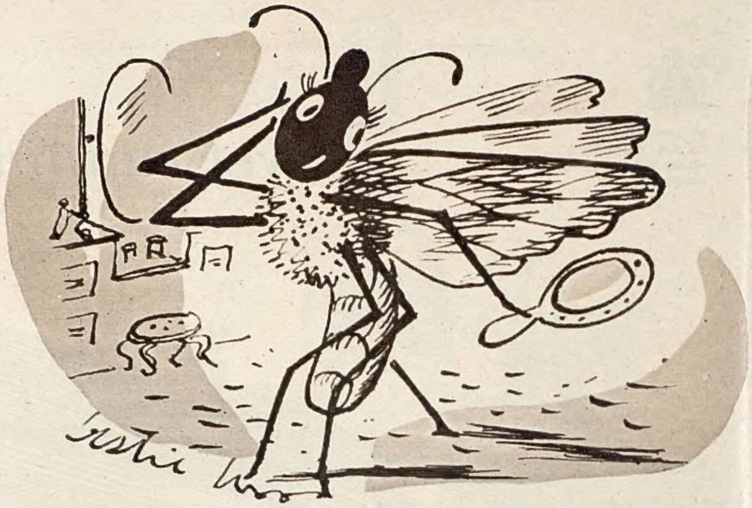

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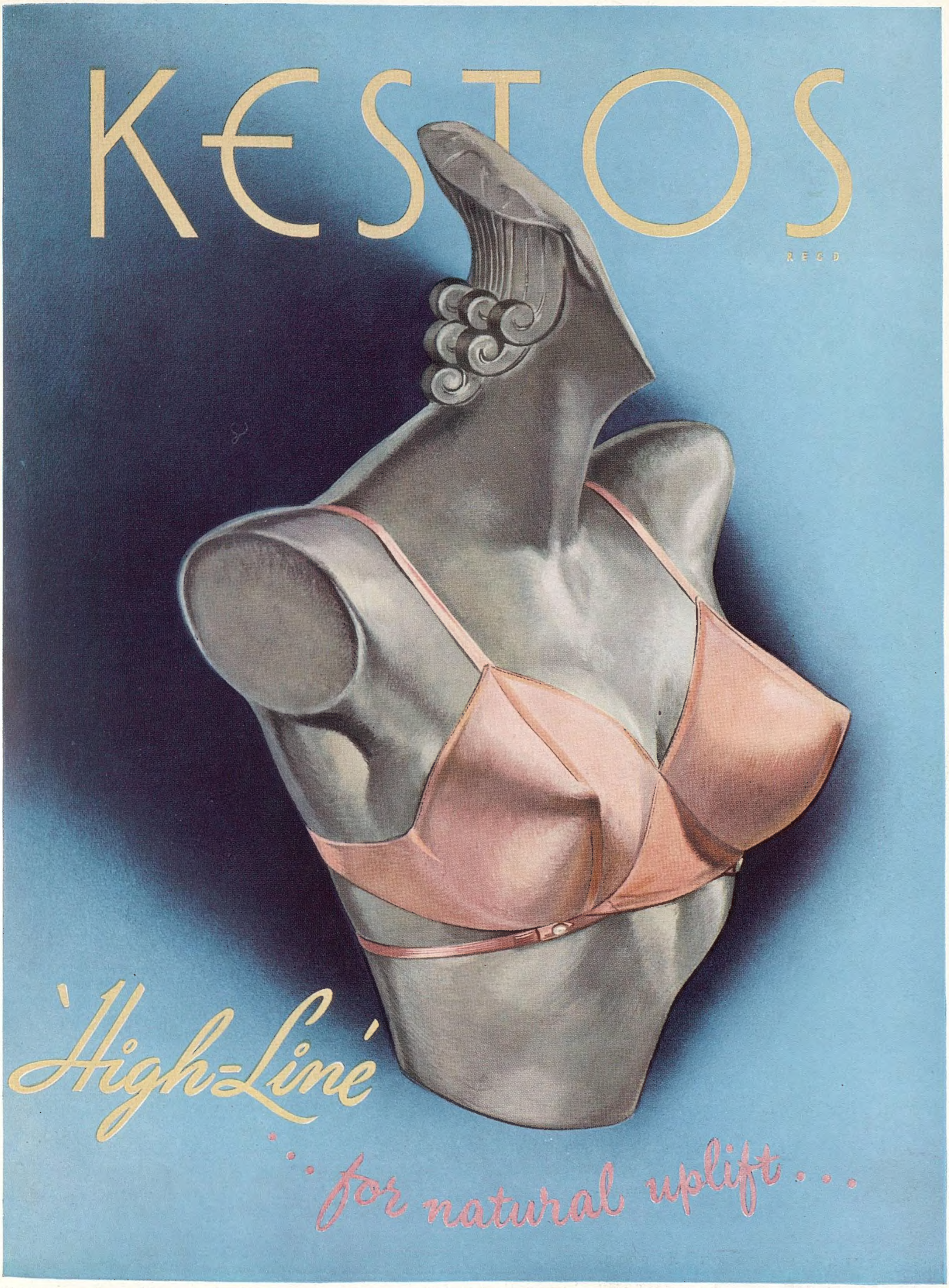

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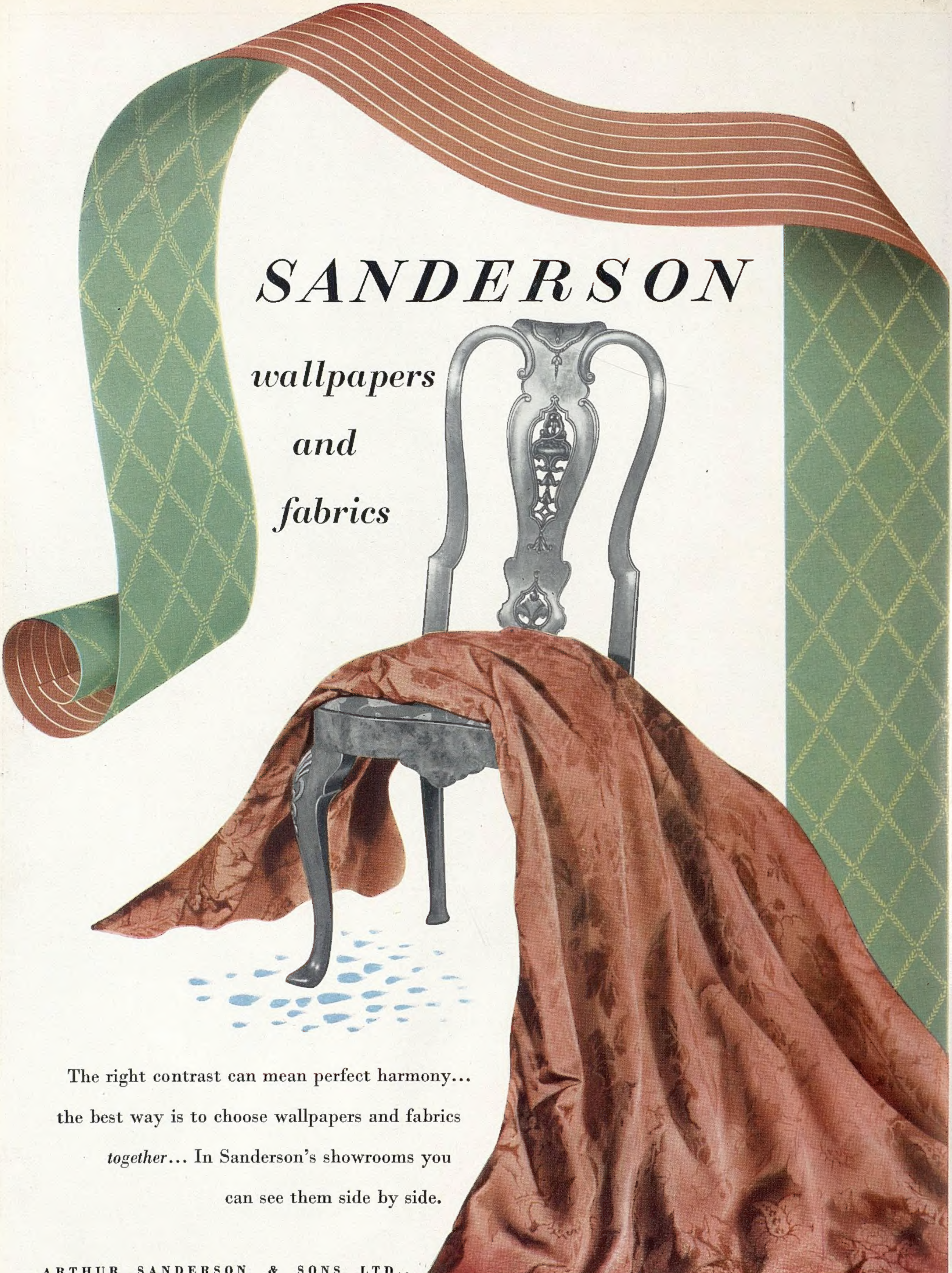

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